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MEMOIR AND CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO

POLITICAL OCCURRENCES

IN

JUNE AND JULY 1834.

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BY THE

RIGHT HON. EDWARD JOHN LITTLETON

FIRST LORD HATHERTON.

B. 2920.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS

BY

HENRY REEVE, ESQ.

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INTRODUCTION

BY THE EDITOR.

On November 27, 1862, a few months before his death, the late Lord Hatherton requested me, in a letter dictated and signed by himself, to take charge of the Memoir which is published in this volume. He confided it to me in order that the occurrences which had led to the dissolution of Lord Grey's administration should, if necessary, be correctly explained in case these transactions should, in my own lifetime, become the subject of historical discussion or controversy. And he foresaw that the time might arrive when the publication of Memoirs by other persons, who were concerned in the events of that period, would render it desirable that the exact truth should be known, although, from consideration to some eminent statesmen now no more, it could not be published at an earlier period. He left it to my own sense of propriety to make this publication when it should be opportune and necessary.

I accepted this trust at the hands of Lord Hatherton. It had to me the solemnity of a dying injunction, for the letter I refer to was the last received from him,

and he expired on May 4, 1863. The volume containing the Memoir and Correspondence (in original) I soon afterwards replaced at Teddesley, where it has remained in the interval, and where it properly belongs. But I reserved to myself the privilege of performing the duty I had undertaken to fulfil, whenever the proper moment should appear to the late Lord Hatherton's heirs and representatives, as well as to myself, to have arrived.

In our opinion, that time is come. If ever the papers contained in this volume are to be made public, and to pass from the privacy of political correspondence to the publicity of history, it should be before those persons have all quitted the scene who are contemporary witnesses to their accuracy and truth. Few, indeed, of the members of Lord Grey's administration are still in existence, and none, it is believed, to whom the publication of these documents can be in the slightest degree annoying or painful. For the result of the perusal of these letters is alike honourable to almost every one concerned in these transactions. If it was ever suspected or surmised that some intrigue, or sinister purpose, lay at the bottom of the *imbroglio*, and that more was intended than met the eye, that suspicion must be for ever set at rest. The correspondence and the conduct of each member of the Government was precisely what was to be expected of English gentlemen and statesmen who knew what was due to themselves and to each other.

If I am unable to make this assertion entirely without reservation, the difficulty arises from the version which Lord Brougham has inserted in his Autobiography (vol. iii. pp. 391–401) of these transactions. It is necessary that his narrative should be given in full in his own terms.

It soon became necessary to consider the question of the Irish Coercion Bill. The Act of last session had undoubtedly been successful. Under its provisions districts in Westmeath and Galway had been proclaimed; the number of offences had thereupon greatly diminished. When the question of continuing or renewing the Act was placed before Lord Wellesley, he recommended that the whole Act should be renewed, with the exception only of the court-martial clauses; and soon afterwards he further confirmed this advice by sending us the opinions of the inspectors-general of provinces, all of whom unanimously recommended a renewal of the Act.

In the Cabinet there was much discussion on the subject, and, I fear I must admit, much difference of opinion. Durham showed a strong tendency to O'Connell's view of the question, and went so far as to oppose on the second reading the clauses in the Bill which related to public meetings.

The Ministers who in Cabinet agreed with Durham's objection to these clauses were Althorp, Charles Grant, Spring Rice, and Abercromby; but these yielded to the majority which supported Grey's view, that these clauses were indispensable.

On July 1 Lord Grey introduced the Bill in an admirable speech. He stated, from Lord Wellesley's despatch of April 18, the grounds for strongly recommending the renewal of the Bill; and he made out a case quite sufficient to convince me of the necessity, even if I had not, after a perusal of the papers sent by Lord Wellesley, fully made up

my mind to support Grey. On the second reading Durham, as I have said, objected to the public meetings clauses. I answered him, strongly supporting Grey, and arguing that it would be most unjust to curb the peasantry by those clauses relating to agrarian disturbances, which Durham did not object to, and to leave agitators like O'Connell free to get up meetings in all the towns of Ireland, professedly for the redress of grievances, but in reality for the repeal of the union. I stated that my consent to the measure was wrung from me by the hard necessity of the case, and that I could agree to its continuance only for the further period of one year. The House approved of the view we took, and the Bill was read a second time without further opposition.

In the course of this debate some observations were made to the effect that negotiations were going on out of doors between a member of the Irish Government and the very men who were the cause of all the mischief. Lord Grey being asked if he knew of, or had originated, any such negotiations, at once indignantly denied all knowledge of anything of the kind, and stated that had he been spoken to on the subject he should not only have expressed his marked disapprobation, but have done all in his power to prevent such proceedings. To Lord Grey's statement I added my belief that no such negotiations had taken place; although I admitted that the Irish Secretary (Littleton) *might* have, unknown to Government, held some communications with parties interested in the subject of the Coercion Bill, just as I myself had done when, sitting on the Woolsack, I had discussed some of the clauses with a noble friend to whom I had gone so far as to express my objection to some parts of the Bill as unconstitutional, and only to be tolerated in a case of the most urgent necessity; of which necessity I had become entirely convinced, after a perusual of the papers which had been quoted by Lord Grey when he introduced the Bill.

The bill was ordered to be committed on an early day, and now came out in the House of Commons disclosures which

had important consequences. It was there stated by Littleton, the Irish Secretary—and this was afterwards confirmed by Althorp—that a communication had been made by Littleton to O'Connell, to the effect that certain clauses of the Bill were under the consideration of the Cabinet; that Littleton had expressed a hope that such clauses would be omitted in the new Bill, but had by no means stated that such was the decision of Ministers; that this communication had been made in confidence, and on a promise of absolute secrecy. Littleton himself, in his place, admitted in so many words that 'he had committed a gross indiscretion,' but added that such indiscretion could in no respect justify O'Connell's breach of faith, in telling others what had taken place in confidence and secrecy.

O'Connell, when he first heard that the Bill was to be renewed in all its parts, had written a letter to Wexford, abusing the Ministry as 'as a base Whig faction which threatened to enslave Ireland;' and he forthwith started a repealer as candidate at the coming election.

O'Connell's defence to Littleton's charge of breach of confidence was, that upon the faith of Littleton's assurance that the objectionable clauses were to be omitted, he had at once withdrawn 'the repealer,' and had prepared his Irish friends in Parliament to support the Government; that finding Lord Grey had, in the very teeth of Littleton's assurance, brought in the Bill without the omissions, he considered that he had been tricked, and that he and his friends had been so grossly deceived by Littleton that he regarded the confidence in which the communication had been made as at an end; that such confidence never would have been broken by him, if he had not been thus tricked and deceived.

Littleton stated afterwards in the House that he had not communicated with O'Connell till after consulting friends upon whose judgment he could rely, and that in all he had done he had acted under what he considered a sufficient authority.

This was supposed to refer to Althorp; and undoubtedly, when the effect all these circumstances had upon the Ministry was discussed in the Commons, Althorp stated that when Littleton suggested to him the expediency of telling O'Connell, he had strongly warned him to use the most extreme caution in any communication he might make, and on no account to commit himself.

When all the questions connected with the Coercion Bill were discussed in the Cabinet, Lord Grey, at one of our meetings held shortly before he introduced the Bill in the Lords, laid before us a letter from Lord Wellesley, which he had received on June 23. In this letter Lord Wellesley stated his opinion that the public meetings clauses might be safely omitted, remarking that the change of circumstances since he had written his letters of April 18 and June 11, to Lord Melbourne, were sufficient to justify this change in his opinion. Althorp quite agreed with this view, so also did Charles Grant, Spring Rice, Abercromby, and Edward Ellice. But the majority of the Cabinet decided to adopt Lord Grey's view, which was, that notwithstanding Lord Wellesley's letter, the Bill must be renewed, omitting only the court-martial clauses.

Grey considered this letter so strictly private, that he thought he was scarcely justified in showing it to the Cabinet, and that nothing but the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed could have permitted him to refer to it in the House of Lords, as he did on July 9, when he stated the grounds of his resignation.

In consequence of what had passed in the House of Commons, Althorp felt that the grounds upon which the renewal of the Bill had been originally urged by Lord Wellesley, and on which he himself was to have carried the Bill through the Commons, had been cut away by Lord Wellesley's letter of June the 21st, and the change of opinion he therein expressed; and, therefore, feeling that he could no longer

act usefully to the Government or satisfactorily to himself, he wrote a letter to Lord Grey tendering his resignation. He adhered to this in a subsequent interview, and this determined Lord Grey himself to resign, which he accordingly did, and announced it in the Lords on July 9, in a speech in which he was very greatly affected.

In referring to the communication made to O'Connell, Grey only designated this as the height of imprudence. Like a true gentleman as he was, he accused no one, but put the grounds of his resignation on the loss of Althorp, as the leader of the Government in the Commons, and as the man on whom he placed his chief confidence. But *I knew* that he felt most severely the proceedings of those who had influenced Lord Wellesley, and had dealt with O'Connell. The letter which Littleton had written to Lord Wellesley, and which had produced Lord Wellesley's letter to Grey of June 21st, was concocted, as Grey entirely believed, by Edward Ellice. Certainly he blamed him more than he blamed Durham or any one else; and afterwards, in referring to this painful subject, he exclaimed to me, 'But to think of Ellice, "mine own familiar friend who did eat of my bread," to think of him of all men thus conspiring against me!'

At this period of wranglings and disputes, and charges against everybody, more or less well-founded, the mischief-makers attempted to get up a case against me, founded upon a letter I had written to Lord Wellesley. A letter was in fact written about this period, but it was of a purely private nature, and could not at any time have exercised the smallest influence on his mind. How should it? It was a letter about some verses of Lord Wellesley's, and about other gossip, too private to be here quoted. But the sentence I have referred to was as follows: 'You have done yourself much credit, in my opinion, in recommending the giving up the court-martial clauses in the Bill. If things were in such a state as to justify you in recommending the omission of the unconstitutional clauses about meetings also, you would

be on a pinnacle.' That was the exact sentence, and contained every word I wrote to Lord Wellesley on the subject.

On Grey's resignation I went to the King, and assured him that I believed I could persuade Althorp to retract his resignation, and that I hoped Grey would return also, as we all most anxiously desired his continuance; and all must be aware how severe a blow on the Government his retirement would inflict. His Majesty seemed puzzled, and repeated his former assertion of some weeks before, that while Grey and I remained together he was firm in our support. He expressed great doubt of our being able to go on, and left on my mind the very distinct impression that he was disposed to accept *all* our resignations, and try a Tory Government.

The King's situation and ours, then, was this, according to my observation, and all which followed has demonstrated that I was right in my estimate of it. Sick of a Government that was urged on to make changes, of which he had had quite enough; still more sick of being urged on by that Goment to consent to fresh changes; panting for the quiet of Tory Ministry, the natural favourite of all kings; not relishing a set of Ministers who looked to popular support rather than to Court favour; still less liking a Ministry which almost every month spoke of breaking up (as under Lord Grey had been too often the case), and leaving him in the position, of all others to all kings the most hateful and even alarming, that of being left for a time without a Government, and so feeling all responsibility thrown on themselves; sighing almost equally for a restoration of the peers to his standard, and a cessation of their opposition and that of the Church, the irksomeness of which he had lately shown by his closet speech to the bishops, so very different from his rating letter to them in June, 1833; he, in short, sighed to have a regular Tory Administration. But this he never could have with the present House of Commons, unless the Liberal Government voluntarily broke itself up; when, from their resigning, and the necessity of there being *some* Government, the

Commons would support any one that could be formed, at least for the remainder of the session, when a dissolution would strengthen their hands. All his chance, then, of getting rid of us, and getting hold of a Conservative Ministry that could stand, depended on one of two events—either our resigning and refusing to carry on his affairs, or a vacation coming and enabling him to dissolve. Perceiving this, I acted accordingly, and for ever lost his favour till he was on his deathbed.

To this narrative the Correspondence annexed to Lord Hatherton's Memoir contains, in almost every particular, a conclusive answer. It is well known that at the time when Lord Brougham applied himself to the task of committing to paper the Recollections of his Past Life, his memory was considerably enfeebled by age, and he probably had not access to papers which would have corrected any erroneous impression; but as these statements are now published to the world with the weight of his posthumous authority, it appears to be absolutely necessary to show to what extent they can be relied on.

Lord Brougham appears entirely to have forgotten that the proposal which Lord Wellesley was induced to make for the omission of the Meetings clauses from the renewed Irish Coercion Bill originated *with himself*. It was he who suggested to Mr. Littleton to move the Lord-Lieutenant in that direction; he was understood to have opposed the clauses in the Cabinet, and he boasted that he had thrown himself into the same boat with Littleton in his speech; he

'avowed having had the same views,' and 'explained the use of Mr. Littleton's speaking to O'Connell;'[1] and he was perfectly cognisant of every phase in the negotiations, as will appear from his own letters in this volume. He was equally aware that 'the proceedings of those who had influenced Lord Wellesley and had dealt with O'Connell,' were taken at his own instigation; and when he adds that 'the letter which Littleton had written to Lord Wellesley, and which produced Wellesley's letter to Grey, of the 21st June, was concocted, as Grey entirely believed, by Edward Ellice,' he asserts what is wholly inconsistent with fact. It is due to the memory of Mr. Ellice to say that his hand nowhere appears in any part of these transactions. Mr. Ellice was a frank and eager politician, who did not hesitate to express a difference of opinion from his dearest friends. I believe he differed from Lord Grey in his view of this very question; but Mr. Ellice's character, and above all his relations to Lord Grey, rendered him utterly incapable of conspiring against him, and I do not believe Lord Grey for one moment suspected him of it.

The colleague whom Lord Grey may have suspected of conspiring against him in this matter, was not Mr. Ellice, but the Lord High Chancellor; and this is perhaps the reason why a different colour has been given in Lord Brougham's autobiography to the transaction. Lord Grey was no doubt irritated and annoyed that proceedings, which he disapproved, should

[1] See Lord Brougham's letter, No. xviii., p. 59, and his letter No. xxxvii., p. 85.

have been taken behind his back and without his knowledge; and at the moment he may have attributed motives to different persons, which he would have found, on calmer reflection, to be purely imaginary. The truth is, that no one was conspiring against Lord Grey at all. Lord Brougham had no prospect in life so much to his own advantage as that of retaining the Great Seal, with Lord Grey at the head of the Government. Lord Wellesley was influenced by no motive, but an amiable desire to take whatever course might be most convenient to the Cabinet and to Ministers in the House of Commons. As for seeking a pretence to break up the Administration, the difficulty was all the other way, for it was threatened with daily dissolution.

It only remains for me to add, that although I take the whole responsibility of this publication, at the present time, upon myself, the present representatives of the late Lord Hatherton are not unwilling that it should be made. They think with me that it was undoubtedly Lord Hatherton's intention and desire that it should be published; and if the publication were still longer postponed, the interest which attaches to transactions already remote might altogether expire. In the Memoir nothing has been changed, but some of the letters, and some portions of other letters, have for various reasons been omitted. A few explanatory notes have been added by the Editor, which are marked with his initials.

HENRY REEVE.

MEMOIR AND CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO

POLITICAL OCCURRENCES IN JUNE & JULY 1834

THE following Correspondence refers to a transaction the circumstances of which it was impossible for me fully to explain at the time without an injurious disclosure of confidential communications which I had no right to make, though my forbearance severely affected me at that period.

I feel it due, however, to myself here to record, together with the following letters, this brief but exact explanation of the occurrences to which they relate, which may at any time be published if thought desirable.

When, in May 1833, at the earnest request of Earl Grey and Lord Althorp, I undertook the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland, on Lord Stanley's relinquishment of it—Sir John Hobhouse, who had first of all undertaken it, having resigned it on losing his election for Westminster—the insurrection against tithe payments, and other prædial outrages, were at their height. I was immediately called on not only to superintend the execution of the Coercion Act, but to devise in the first instance some immediate relief for the starving

clergy of the Irish Church Establishment, and then some effectual measure for the permanent security of Church property.

For these latter purposes Lord Stanley had left me no plans, nor did he offer me any suggestions. Lord Althorp, before I accepted the office, engaged that the Cabinet should furnish me with a plan for the immediate relief of the clergy. But I never received any.

Having taken the appointment, I went down to my election, which I carried, after a short but not inexpensive contest with Lord Ingestre; and on my return set to work to frame a measure for the immediate relief of the clergy. Many of them had received no tithes or composition for several years. There were very few in the more Roman Catholic counties who were not in the deepest distress. Many were the cases in which life insurances (the sole reliance of the clergyman's surviving families) were sacrificed, and in numerous instances ineffectual efforts were made to enforce rights at the point of the bayonet. In the county of Wexford, and in other parts of the south of Ireland, the military and police were concentrated for the purpose. But though successful in a few instances, they were generally baffled by the numbers and artifice of their opponents. Advances to the amount of 60,000*l.* had already been made by the Government for the relief of the clergy in the years 1830, 1831, and 1832, whose tithes had been subsequently converted into Crown debts. But all the legal and military power of the Government had succeeded in recovering only 12,000*l.* of the amount, at some cost of blood, and an immense amount of expenditure.

Such was the state of things in the month of June 1833. The Session was then too far advanced to admit of the preparation of any large and permanent measure. I attended two Cabinets; when it was agreed, on my suggestion, to ask Parliament to advance an additional sum of one million for the relief of the clergy, to be repaid on a plan then settled and approved. And as a means of obtaining this grant, the Government pledged itself to devote the recess to the consideration of some new system of levying and securing the tithe revenues of the clergy.

This arrangement, after some opposition, in Parliament was secured; and it being thought desirable to allay as soon as possible the excitement which had prevailed in Ireland, Lord Althorp in the House of Commons declared that the Government would abstain from any further levy of the tithes of 1830, 1831, and 1832, which had been converted into Crown debt.

This declaration was either extensively misunderstood or perverted in Ireland, and engendered a not uncommon belief among the ignorant that the Government had pledged itself to an absolute abandonment of tithes in that country—an impression which created much mischief and difficulty in that and the subsequent year.

On my arrival at Dublin in the month of September, I found the amount of business in my office far exceeding anything before known in the most troubled times. Besides the distribution of the million by Commissioners amongst the numerous clerical and lay claimants, and the steps requisite to determine the precise amount at which each acre of titheable land

should be assessed for the purpose of recovering repayment of the loans, I had to institute all the requisite measures for a compulsory composition of tithes throughout Ireland under Lord Stanley's Act, to select the Commissioners, to give them instructions, to answer their enquiries, and to consider with the law officers the numerous legal questions which every post brought to the Castle from each Commissioner. In addition to this labour, a new Grand Jury Law, introducing a new system of executing county works, and a new Special and Petty Jury Act, were to be put in execution. The result was an increase of clerks in the Chief Secretary's office from the usual establishment of 17 to 142.

The great administrative experience of Sir W. Gosset, the Under Secretary, and the remarkable ability, energy, and industry of my private Secretary, Mr. Craig, enabled me, with application on my own part, to dispose daily of the large current of business flowing from these sources.

But my greatest difficulty arose from the circumstance that I had no efficient law officer in Parliament; and of those who were about me in Dublin, Blackburne the Attorney-General, an able and honest man, did not belong to our party, nor were his political views at all mine, nor those of the majority of Earl Grey's Cabinet. Crampton was an honest man, but of no efficiency in council, and Greene, the counsel to the Chief Secretary, an able and excellent lawyer and most upright man, was of Tory principles. Lord Anglesey's confidence was always the result of personal feeling. He liked certain men, gave them his confidence, and was cleverly managed by them. Blackburne and Greene

afterwards joined Sir Robert Peel's Government, which with their known principles I could not condemn.

Lord Wellesley himself, with all his experience of Irish Government, could render me no assistance. The evils to be conquered were not of a description to which his great genius was suited, restricted as it was by the orders of the Government in England (a natural result of the heterogenous character of Lord Grey's Cabinet as regarded Irish measures) and the growing apprehensions of William the Fourth respecting their Irish policy. Could Lord Wellesley have exercised an unfettered judgment, his enlarged and vigorous mind would soon have remodelled institutions, and have put each party and interest in its right place in Ireland, and have given contentment, order, and strength to that part of His Majesty's dominions.

Circumstanced as I was I set to work—with the aid of O'Hanlon, the counsel to the Irish Office in London, as draughtsman—and weighed the various plans which had occurred to, or been suggested to me, for putting Church property on a securer basis. The simpler and the better schemes, which the judgment of Lord Wellesley and my own would have preferred, we were compelled to abandon from a conviction that several members of Lord Grey's Cabinet would not acquiesce in them, and that the law officers we found in Ireland would lend us no effectual aid in maturing them. We at length agreed, and sent over to the Cabinet the measure which I introduced into the House of Commons on February 20, 1834, and which I believe was the only one in which Lord Grey's Cabinet could have been

brought to concur at that time. They considered it thoroughly, and unanimously adopted it.

This measure encountered the greatest difficulties in Parliament. Lord Stanley strenuously supported it; but it met with the opposition of the Primate, Mr. Shaw, and the Irish Church party on one side, and of O'Connell and the Repealers on the other; the one party deeming it went too far, the other not far enough. Both parties were aided by the great body of the Conservative Opposition.

The Irish Repeal members were rendered implacable by the Coercion Act, which had occasioned the bitterest conflicts in its passage through the House of Commons in the preceding Session, and the removal of Stanley from the Irish Government had mitigated nothing of their rancour towards the administration of which he was still a most able and conspicuous supporter in a higher office; though in my individual capacity as his successor I was treated by them with favour and kindness, several of them secretly rendering me good offices.

In this state of feeling on the part of the Irish members, I was compelled to submit to an extensive modification of my measure. Considering me to be pledged to the main provision of the bill, they sought an interview with Lord Althorp, who had never liked it, and as they procured his acquiescence, I was compelled to subscribe to their views.

Their form of measure was undoubtedly far simpler and better than mine. But I knew it to be incompatible with the views of several of Lord Grey's Cabinet, and feared the result.

As soon, however, as Lord Althorp and the Irish

Liberal members had come to an understanding, he took the precaution, with my concurrence, of explaining the proposed amendments to Lord Stanley. I was present at the interview, at Lord Althorp's official residence in Downing Street. Lord Stanley gave an unwilling assent, but he did assent. Nevertheless a want of cordial interest in the success of the measure in its new shape was too apparent. The division of opinion, and the want of cohesion in the Ministry, soon became subject of common conversation.[1]

These difficulties naturally made me anxious to remove all other impediments to a good understanding with the Irish members. I accordingly resolved to clear the course as far as depended on me for the improved Tithe Bill.

The main obstacle was the necessity of renewing, in some shape before the end of the Session, the Irish Coercion Act. To the renewal of what might be called the Curfew clauses, and the Lord Lieutenant's power of proclaiming districts, no opposition was intended.

[1] At about this time I remember being at a levee. It was in the inner room, where the Ministers were always first received. I was at the end of the circle. Two or three yards above me stood Stanley and Graham. The King stopped, and appeared to speak with peculiar cordiality to them. I did not know the subject, but I at last heard him say, *sotto voce* and significantly: 'Well, I am sorry for it, but I agree so much with *you two* gentlemen on other matters that I don't mind it.' It was impossible not to be struck by the shrewd look which Graham gave Stanley. It was only one of many evidences I met of his determined adherence to him, and his preparations to recede from his other colleagues. He had told me openly not long before, 'Stanley, depend upon it, is the winning horse,' and I observed that a very few months after Lord Ingestre had opposed my re-election for South Staffordshire, on my taking the office of Chief Secretary, Graham, who was First Lord of the Admiralty, gave him a ship.

But to the restriction on County Meetings for the purpose of petitioning, a determined opposition was prepared on the part of O'Connell and the Irish members. I clearly foresaw that without a modification of the Coercion Act, by the omission of the Meetings clauses, I could never carry the far more important measure of the Tithe Bill, which we all considered likely, in its new shape, to give security to Church property, and to aid most effectively in tranquillizing the country.

Another measure eagerly called for by the Reform party in Ireland was the appointment of a Commission to ascertain the proportion of Protestants and Roman Catholics in each parish in Ireland. I considered the information indispensable to the adjustment of any large plan of Church reform in that country. I eagerly pressed the appointment of such a Commission, and Lord John Russell strenuously urged it on his colleagues. The Cabinet adopted the suggestion, and left it to me to prescribe the duties of the Commission, and to select the Commissioners.

But party differences had now reached a crisis in the Ministry. Certain opinions declared by Lord John Russell in debate on Irish Church affairs had already aroused the mistrust of Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham, and a motion made by Mr. Ward on May 27th for a modified appropriation of Church property in Ireland, and which he evidently brought forward at that time in hopes of completing the breach, produced their resignation, with those of the Earl of Ripon and the Duke of Richmond. This secession weakened the Ministry, but allowed a freer course of action to the remaining portion of it.

On a Sunday about the beginning of June I had met Lord Duncannon by appointment at the Chancellor's (Lord Brougham's), to consider and settle the terms of the Commission. Having arrived early, the Chancellor conversed with me on the general position of Irish affairs, and especially on the means of smoothing a course for the Tithe Bill. I told him that there was but one remaining obstacle to its progress. Though personally I was on the best possible terms with all the members of the Irish Liberal party, the discussion on the Coercion Bill was approaching, and all the violence and rancour by which Lord Stanley and the Government had been assailed on its introduction last year would now be revived if it were not at least so far modified as to omit the Meetings clauses; but if that were done the Tithe Bill in its new form would be acquiesced in, and the property might be saved. That I was satisfied that the intended resistance to the Meetings clauses was very much a point of honour with O'Connell, who was still able to call and hold meetings in a manner that eluded the application of the law, and that it would be wise to give him that sop. It would answer its purpose if it lulled him even for a time. Agitation no doubt would revive, but it would be directed against other objects. The main interest at stake was the safety of Church property. I entered more fully and warmly into the matter with Brougham because *I had been desired by Lord Wellesley*, in a letter dated the 23rd May, *to consult with Brougham* on the matter as affecting the party interests of the Government.

Lord Brougham fully concurred in my view, and spoke angrily of Lord Grey's obstinacy on the point.

I told him I was aware of it, and had therefore abstained from pressing the concession on him more strongly than I had done.

Nothing more passed on the subject till June 19, on which day Lord Brougham sent for me to his private room at the House of Lords. He told me he had written to Lord Wellesley, urging him strongly to give up the clauses against Meetings in the new Coercion Bill, and added, he thought I should do well to write to the same effect. He particularly requested I would ask him, if he acquiesced, to address his letter to Lord Grey. He was the only obstacle, and there was no doubt he would yield to Lord Wellesley's advice.

I told Lord Brougham that my judgment entirely coincided with his, and that I should press our joint advice the more willingly because, since the date of Lord Wellesley's despatch on April 18, recommending a renewal of the Act, Ireland had been perfectly tranquil. I accordingly wrote to Lord Wellesley the following letter:—

Grosvenor Place, June 19, 1834.

My dear Lord,—The Chancellor sent for me this evening, and told me of the letter he had written to you.

My own opinion has always been that the Irish Government is not likely to require any other extraordinary powers than those that are directed against agrarian disturbances. Those powers are comprised in the following clauses of the Disturbance Act: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 (qy.), 22, 23, 24 (in part), 25 (in part), 29 (qy.), 34, 35, 36 (qy.), 37 (qy.), 38 (qy.), 39.

These clauses compounded into one Act would effect

all you would have to do this year, and we might take the Bill for three years instead of one.

You will perceive the clause authorizing the Lord-Lieutenant to prohibit public meetings and the Court Martial clauses are omitted, and they constitute half of the present Act. My firm belief is, that such powers, if we pass our Tithe Bill, will be perfectly useless, and that their enactment will create great difficulties in the carrying of the Tithe Bill, and will afterwards stimulate O'Connell to agitation in Ireland by exasperating him and his party.

The Tories, since the O'Connellites have declared war, are making preparation for taking the field. Peel yesterday, at a large meeting of the Conservatives, declared that the time was now come when it was their duty to take a position, and, in short, declared his willingness to take the Government. What they mean to do is to unite their forces in the House of Lords, and to reintroduce the clauses the Government have resolved on omitting (from the Tithe Bill), and thus to bring the two Houses into collision. The Lords will insist, and Lord Grey will have to choose between the Lords' Bill and no Bill at all. This is their short-sighted game, incredible as it may appear.

Under such circumstances a complete union in the House of Commons between the Government and the great mass of the Irish members is of the first importance.

A restriction of the new Disturbance Bill to the clauses I have mentioned will completely effect this object.

The only question is, whether the Government should

dispense with the power of suppressing meetings. You did not want it last year, and there is much less prospect of your wanting it this. I think the demand for it may risk serious consequences to the party in power at this very critical conjunction.

Would not the coercive powers contained in the clauses I have mentioned, if enacted for three or five years, be a good substitute for the existing measure for one year longer?

The Change of Venue Bill expires this Session. I suppose its renewal is not desired; but as I have not observed that any of your letters to Lord Melbourne have alluded to this subject, I think it would be well if you would consider it.

I have asked the Attorney-General his opinion on this subject.

I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

If it were possible for you to form your opinion on these topics of Lord Brougham and my letters in time to write to Lord Grey by return of post, the advantage of his receiving your letter on Monday before we proceed with the Tithe Bill would be very great.

To his Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant.

To this Lord Wellesley replied, in a letter dated June 21: 'I have received your letter of June 19. I entirely agree with you, and have written to Lords Grey, and Brougham, and Melbourne, accordingly.' In another letter, dated June 24, he adds: 'I have looked over the Protection Act, and I think the

clauses you enumerate, with the alteration you propose, will answer all purposes.'

In a letter of June 21 it will be seen that the Attorney-General Blackburne also entirely acquiesced in the policy of giving up the clauses in question.

As soon as I received Lord Wellesley's letter of the 21st, I showed it to Lord Melbourne, who immediately condemned it as an imprudent step which would create great difficulties with Lord Grey, and particularly complained of Lord Wellesley[1] *not* having written to himself instead of to Lord Grey. He added, however, 'There could be no question that the clauses must be given up, as no Government could ask Parliament for an unconstitutional power in Ireland, the necessity of which the Lord-Lieutenant had been led to disclaim.'

I then went to Lord Althorp, who viewed the matter in the same light, except that he did not condemn Lord Wellesley. 'He feared Lord Grey would refuse any concession, and might even retire if it were pressed. But I might entirely rely on it that the clauses in question should form no part of a new Bill—as he himself was resolved to resign sooner than allow them now to be renewed; and Lord Grey could not risk that result.' I then asked him whether, as I knew that O'Connell was about to enter immediately on a new course of agitation in Ireland previously to the threatened renewal of the Coercion Act, it would not be prudent to see him and apprize him that the precise form and extent of measure were not decided on. Lord

[1] I suppose from this that Lord Wellesley had intended to write to Lord Melbourne on the 21st, but did not do so, though he says in his letter of that date 'I have written.'

Althorp concurred in and sanctioned that step, cautioning me, however, not to commit myself by any detail to him.

Lord Althorp subsequently told me that a time had been fixed for the Cabinet to meet to consider Lord Wellesley's recommendation.

In the course of the day O'Connell came to the Irish Office, and I cautioned him against any unnecessary excitation of the people in Ireland until he should have seen the new Coercion Bill, which would be renewed, but with certain limitations. He thanked me, and promised to consider my communication as strictly private and confidential.

I am not sure whether the Cabinet met on the Sunday or on the Sunday week following.[1] But I met the Cabinet Ministers as they were coming out of Downing Street, when Lord Althorp told me, to my surprise, that they had resolved to renew the old Bill without any alteration; that Lord Grey would not

[1] [Lord Hatherton is in doubt as to the exact date of this Cabinet; but I am informed by Earl Russell, who perfectly remembers that Cabinet and what took place at it, that it was held at Holland House on the evening of Sunday, June 29. Lord Hatherton doubtless met some of the Cabinet Ministers in Downing Street on Monday morning, for he was not at Holland House, not being a Cabinet Minister; but in a letter to Lord Wellesley, dated the 29th June, which will be found in this collection, he says expressly, 'A Cabinet was held *this evening*, at which your two letters to Lord Grey were read and discussed.' He must therefore have known the result that night, and the statement in this part of the memoir is not literally accurate. This date is extremely important, for it was on this occasion that Lord Grey made known to his colleagues the terms of the memorable letter addressed to him by Lord Wellesley six days previously; and he unhappily succeeded in persuading the majority of the Cabinet (out of deference to himself) to reject the opinion of the Lord-Lieutenant and to retain the clauses. Lord Brougham did not disclose the part he had taken in the

concede anything, founding his refusal on the ground of Lord Wellesley having written him a private letter only nine or ten days before, urging in general terms the renewal of the Act, and not proposing any limitation. Lord Althorp said nothing of his intention to resign.

[At this point of time an omission occurs in the narrative which ought, I think, to be supplied, and I shall briefly do so in terms simply taken from 'Hansard's Reports of the Proceedings in Parliament.'

The Cabinet having resolved on June 29 to adhere to its intention of bringing in the Irish Coercion Bill unchanged, Lord Grey on July 1 moved the first reading of the renewed Bill. In the course of his speech, Lord Grey stated that he held in his hand a letter addressed by the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Secretary of State, dated April 18, in which his Excellency expressed 'his entire approbation of the opinions which had been expressed in favour of the Act, and his most anxious desire that the Act might be renewed.'

No despatch of a more recent date than April 18 was laid before the House of Lords; and Lord Grey said nothing whatever on this occasion to imply that Lord Wellesley had much more recently expressed a contrary opinion. The letter of June 21 had been shown, or partly shown, to the Cabinet; but its existence was entirely withheld from Parliament, on the

matter. This was the fatal decision; for it led to the charge brought against Mr. Littleton by O'Connell of a breach of faith, and it was followed by the resignation of Lord Althorp, which broke up the Government.—H. R. 1872].

ground (as was afterwards stated by Lord Grey, on July 9) that it was a private confidential letter, in which the Lord-Lieutenant did appear to take a new view of the subject. The House of Lords therefore assented to the first reading of the Bill, under the impression that the opinion of the Lord-Lieutenant still remained the same that it had been on April 18, and that the powers asked for were regarded as indispensable to the peace of Ireland. But this misapprehension was dispelled by the altercation which took place in the House of Commons on July 3, when O'Connell disclosed the fact that a very different solution of the difficulty had been entertained and anticipated by the Irish department of the Government. It was the discovery of this contradiction which gave so violent and inflammatory a character to the debate. Lord Grey had succeeded in overruling the opinion of the Lord-Lieutenant and of several of his colleagues; he had succeeded in causing the powerful arguments of his letter of the 21st to be buried in the secrecy of private correspondence; but when he found that the fact of these divided counsels had transpired, and was in the possession of O'Connell himself, his position became altogether untenable. These results, however, could not be equally apparent at the moment.

I now return to Lord Hatherton's narrative.—H. R. 1872.]

Though surprised at this result of the Cabinet deliberation, I did not feel embarrassed by it, as Mr. O'Connell had given me the strongest assurances that he should consider my conversation with him as strictly confidential, and I believed him.

The discussion which took place in the House of Commons on July 3 showed me that I was deceived. The report in the 'Mirror of Parliament,' though not literally accurate, is not unfair; it gives a tolerably accurate version of what passed between Mr. O'Connell and myself.[1]

Nothing even from that gentleman could be more disgraceful than his conduct in this instance. He endeavoured to excuse its grossness by charging me with intentional deception of him for the sake of obtaining an advantage in an accidental election. Mr. Hume, Mr. Warburton, Mr. More O'Ferral, Mr. Carew O'Dwyer, Mr. H. Grattan, and other Irish members, told me they had upbraided O'Connell with his unjustifiable breach of faith. Henry Grattan reproached him publicly on a subsequent occasion.

On the following day Lord Brougham, in a second speech in the House of Lords, defended me, denying that I had entered into anything like a negotiation with O'Connell, and admitted that he himself, in correspondence with Lord Wellesley, had enquired if the Meetings clauses could not be dispensed with.

On that day, the 4th, my position, rendered painful enough by O'Connell's breach of faith, appeared so much worse by Lord Grey's permitting it to be be-

[1] There is an error of fact in O'Connell's statement, for the record of which, as he announced it, I am responsible as well as himself. Wishing to encourage my confidence in him, at our interview he said, 'Oh, you know Lord Anglesey used to confide in me; you may do so equally.' This observation about Lord Anglesey he puts into my mouth in his statement. I quite forgot to remark, in reply, that the observation had been his and not mine. I believe he did not mean to state a falsehood; but spoke under excitement, in a hurry, and from a confused recollection.

lieved in the House of Lords that the question was completely settled at the time when I had assured O'Connell that it was undecided, that on the 5th I sent to Lord Grey my resignation, founded on that ground. He replied to that communication in a very kind and deprecatory letter the same day.

On the 9th Lord Althorp, in presenting some papers connected with the subject, declared that I had reason for stating to O'Connell that at the time of my interview with him the question was unsettled, and under the consideration of Government. He announced that I had tendered my resignation, omitting, however, to state the reason of my retirement, and gave a complimentary reason for its being declined.

I was still dissatisfied with my position, for the public did not know, and could not know from me, that, in counselling Lord Wellesley to write the advice he gave to Lord Grey, I had acted under the advice of the Lord Chancellor, concurred in by many of the Cabinet, and that for my communication with O'Connell I had the express authority of Lord Althorp, the leader of the House of Commons and general manager of the Parliamentary measures of the Government in that House.

I therefore sought an interview with Lord Ebrington and Fazakerley, two members in whose judgment and sense of honour I knew that Lord Althorp in common with the whole House of Commons placed the highest confidence. I revealed to them without reserve everything that had passed. They correctly estimated my position, and sought a conference with Lord Althorp. They found him decided to resign. Dissatisfied with

the position of affairs, and fearing that he might be accused of urging Parliament to a line on a great constitutional question at variance with his own private opinions, which were sure to become more fully known and discussed, if a motion, of which notice had been given—for the production of the private correspondence of the Lord-Lieutenant with certain members of the Government—were carried or even made in Parliament, he had resolved to retire from the Government.

Consequently, on the following day, July 9, in explaining his own resignation in the House of Commons, he admitted that he had authorised my communication with O'Connell, but with an injunction of due caution.

Lord Althorp could not explain that the confidence I had in the abandonment of the Meetings clauses had been created by his own assurance that he would resign if they were not given up. Therefore in following Lord Althorp, admitting my own share of error, I restricted myself to saying that in expressing my conviction to O'Connell that the clauses would be given up, 'I acted on an authority on which I thought I could rely.'

O'Connell followed. He had been vehemently upbraided by his friends for his treachery. He retracted all his charges against me, recanted on every point, and employed the most fulsome praise of my candour and sincerity.

I believe there was a general feeling that I had not been fairly dealt with. Henry Grattan expressed this opinion strongly in the House of Commons, which responded to his remarks, and Lord Haddington in the House of Lords did me justice.

I am far, however, from wishing to represent myself as entirely free from error in this affair. My entire confidence in O'Connell's assurance that he would consider my communication confidential was not warranted by his character or even by my own experience of it. My only excuse was, that after Lord Melbourne's declaration, and especially after Lord Althorp's express determination to resign rather than submit to the re-enactment of the clauses, it was impossible for me to believe that they could be allowed again to appear in the Bill. I therefore was less cautious than I should have been to conceal from O'Connell a knowledge of Lord Althorp's individual opinion. He was aware of that opinion, and I admitted it.

Lord Althorp's justification for not resigning was that Lord Grey had said that he had only nine or ten days before received a private letter from Lord Wellesley, in which he urged a renewal of the Act generally. That private letter I never saw. But Lord Wellesley's other letters to Lord Grey and to me will be found among the following papers.

I retain the strong opinion I felt at the time, that Lord Althorp should, consistently with his declared determination—which was the occasion of my communication to O'Connell—have compelled the omission of the clauses, or should *then* have tendered his resignation, and not when he did, which then had the effect not of changing Earl Grey's mind, but of breaking up his Government.

Lord Grey justified his refusal to concede the point on the ground of Lord Wellesley's private letter of a former date, not observing that it was completely

revoked by his official[1] one of June 21. I think Lord Grey's ground was narrow, highly unconstitutional, and most impolitic. His obstinate persistence in an unqualified renewal, in spite of the Lord-Lieutenant's disclaimer of its necessity, was fed by his resentment against O'Connell, who had covered him with the most foul-mouthed abuse, and by jealousy of his colleagues, and especially of Brougham, whom he knew to counsel concession, and, as he thought, for a sinister purpose.

After Lord Grey's retirement his resentment was strongly directed against Lord Brougham, whom he suspected of having originated all the mischief by secret communication with Lord Wellesley. Lord Brougham himself, in the House of Lords, had avowed his correspondence with Lord Wellesley on the subject, and I had told Lord Grey of the exact nature of the communication I had with Brougham. But it seemed to strengthen rather than diminish his suspicion of Brougham's motives. It was impossible to have erred more widely. The Chancellor, entirely engrossed and fatigued with the business of his court and the House of Lords, was only anxious to find a way of smoothing a course for the great contested measure of the session, and of obtaining new allies for the Government. Beyond this he had not a motive. Every one knew that his ambition was unbounded, and it is possible that on Lord Grey's often repeated determination to retire he

[1] [Lord Hatherton applies the term 'official' to this communication; but, as has been pointed out by the present Earl Grey, it was not in reality an 'official' communication, being addressed to the First Lord of the Treasury, who regarded it as a private letter.—H. R. 1872.]

might have conceived the notion of succeeding him. But of his anxiety to uphold the fabric of Lord Grey's administration there was as little doubt in the minds of all who knew him as there was of his affection and regard for Lord Grey personally.

To the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland it appears to me that no one can impute any blame in these transactions. He acted under the best advice he could obtain. He complained much, and to his last days, that Lord Melbourne had been negligent in answering his letters on the subject of a renewal of the Coercion Act: that he had written to him urgently asking his advice as to the best time and manner of bringing the matter under the consideration of the Cabinet, and that he left his letters unanswered. Lord Melbourne probably knew it would prove a difficult question with Lord Grey—one on which the Cabinet would be divided. From whatever cause, Lord Wellesley had no answer from the Secretary of State! Who can blame him if, under such circumstances, he acted on the suggestions of the Lord Chancellor and his Chief Secretary? Lord Wellesley felt so strongly this neglect on Lord Melbourne's part, that in the only personal interview he ever had with him afterwards, and which he purposely sought, he told him to his face, 'You were the culprit, and you made me the victim.' Considering Lord Melbourne's office, it was hardly fair to decline advice when asked by the Lord-Lieutenant. But his refusal to commit himself was a proof of his sagacity and habitual discretion.

I ought not to conclude this Memoir without record-

ing the highly honourable conduct of Lord Althorp to me in the sequel of this affair.

Lord Melbourne having been commissioned by the King to reconstruct the administration on Lord Grey's retirement from it, was engaged in that task, when one morning Lord Tavistock and Lord Ebrington called on me, and told me that all the members of the Whig party had signed an address to Lord Althorp, urging him to remain in the Government, as without his aid the party would break up; but that the same step not having been adopted towards Lord Grey, they feared his feelings would be much wounded, and that his mortification would be aggravated by my being retained in the Government, because it would look as if his colleagues and parliamentary supporters condemned him, while they did not condemn me. I at once acquiesced, assuring them that I had no feeling so near my heart as a desire to do everything to soothe and honour one for whom I entertained the greatest respect and affection. They assured me that although they believed that many entertained a desire for my retirement for the reason stated, their act in coming to me was entirely their own, unprompted by any party or by any motive, except the desire to soothe Lord Grey. I replied that from the remarkable kindness with which Lord Grey had begged me not to resign only a few days before his own retirement, and from his manner and the expressions he employed at an interview with me after that event, I thought Lord Grey would consider my continuance in office as his own act; but that, nevertheless, my confidence in their judgment decided me on retiring.

I immediately wrote to Lord Melbourne the letter dated the 16th of July, and sent it to him at the Foreign Office, where he and all his colleagues were assembled that morning, previously to going to St. James's to receive their seals, and to kiss hands on their new appointments. I received no reply. But in the course of the afternoon, after a curious interview with the Lord Chancellor at the House of Lords, I found a messenger had been there from Lord Melbourne, and that he had been long running about the town after me. I immediately repaired to Lord Melbourne's house in South Street, where I found him and Lord Althorp in their court dresses, waiting for me; from the former of whom I learnt that they had all been at St. James's; but that Lord Althorp, having been made acquainted with the contents of my letter, had told his Majesty that, reviewing what had passed, he felt it impossible to continue in the Government unless I continued also. That we were in the same position, and must stand or fall together. That consequently it had been requisite to defer the presentation of the Ministers to their several offices, and it rested with me to say whether the Government should be reconstructed by him or not. Lord Althorp then repeated for himself the same statement to me. I assured Lord Melbourne I had ever had but one anxiety, not to be in their way, and that I begged they would use me as they pleased. They all consequently re-assembled at St. James's and kissed hands.

I could have felt no surprise if my resignation had been accepted, and Lord Althorp had continued in the Government. His conduct was quite unexpected by

me. It was a noble act, dictated by a fine sense of honour, the public knowledge and remembrance of which I hope this brief Memoir may be the means of perpetuating.

His public spirit, too, in resuming office, from which he had so long and so anxiously desired an escape, is worthy of the highest commendation.

HATHERTON.

Teddesley, September 1840.

On re-perusing this Memoir, after a long interval of time, for the purpose of re-considering whether there was any fact, sentiment, or expression which required correction—a duty the more binding from the circumstance of Lord Grey and Lord Althorp being now dead—I find nothing save a few terms relating to O'Connell that requires alteration.

I ought perhaps to have noted particularly the fact of Lord Grey's extreme unwillingness to continue in office, and Althorp's eagerness to find an opportunity to escape from it, long before the occurrences related in this memoir. No doubt they both accepted the more readily on that account the opportunity thus offered. Besides other abundant proofs of their disposition to escape from the turmoil of office, my own letters to Lord Wellesley throughout the Session of 1834 sufficiently prove it.

Teddesley, Dec. 1846.

Teddesley, 4th Nov. 1849.

I this day showed this Memoir to Mr. Fazakerley, who admitted its perfect accuracy and fairness, and approved of its compilation. He begged me also to show it to Macaulay, in whose hands I placed it, and who kept it two days. Macaulay, in returning it to me, said he had not a doubt, from all he had ever heard of the transactions explained in it, of

its being fairly drawn up; that he was surprised I had consented to take so large a share of blame on myself, and still more that I had trusted O'Connell after his conduct to me in 1831, and the exposure I gave him in the House of Commons, which he himself (Macaulay) well remembered. He begged me to show the Memoir to Lord Lansdowne.

Bowood, 4th January 1850.

I this day received back from Lord Lansdowne this book, who kept it two days, and returning it to me said, 'He had found in it some circumstances he had not before been aware of, especially that which explained the part which Lord Brougham had had in advising me. He thought the statement very fairly drawn up, and that I had judged rightly in leaving it behind me.'

30th January 1850.

Macaulay told me this day that he went from Teddesley to Althorp, where Lord Spencer had shown him his brother's letters and papers on the same subject, 'which corroborated every part of my statement in the most complete manner. Lord Spencer's collection contained one letter which is not to be found in mine, a letter from Lord Althorp to Lord Brougham, blowing him up for the advice he had given, and accusing him of being the real author of all the mischief.' I think Lord Althorp's censure was unjust, for the reasons given in this Memoir.

H.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

I.

Extract from a Letter of the Right Hon. Edward J. Littleton, Chief Secretary for Ireland, to the Marquis Wellesley, K.G., Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Grosvenor Place, June 18, 1834.

My dear Lord,—You will perceive by the papers that the Coercion Act Renewal Bill is to be forthwith introduced. It will be brought into the House of Lords by Lord Melbourne. I am to see him on Saturday, to select the documents we shall lay on the tables of both Houses.

O'Connell had thought that by assisting us in the Tithe Bill, and by using his influence in Ireland to procure submission to it, we might be induced to make him the sacrifice of this measure. He would have consented to the *preventive* part of the Bill being renewed, so as to give effective powers to check agrarian disturbances (he told me this). But what he dislikes and fears is the power to prohibit meetings, &c. His rage is excessive. It is perhaps in some degree assumed. He knows his threats to be idle. The Bill will not be twenty lines; and yet he talks of debating every clause, and calling the House over day by day.

I remain, my dear Lord, most faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

II.

Copy of a Letter from the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Attorney-General for Ireland, Mr. Blackburne.

(Secret.) Grosvenor Place, June 10, 1834.

My dear Attorney-General,—I wish you would take the accompanying letter (about the Change of Venue Bill) and talk to the Lord-Lieutenant about it.

It is necessary to know your opinion upon it. But my main object in writing is to give you a pretext for going to him at a moment when I know he will be glad of a visit from you on another subject on which Lord Brougham and I have both written to him this day—*a restriction of the Coercion Bill to the powers requisite to suppress agrarian disturbances.*

It would take me more time than I have left till the post goes out to give you all the reasons why many of us deem such a modification of the Act most desirable for the interest of the existing Government.

If we could know that Lord Wellesley would consent to this *by return of post*, it would keep the Irish members quite straight with us on the Tithe Bill on Monday, and if we can but agree on this the Lords cannot hurt us. But if we differ in the House of Commons the Lords will succeed in giving us a complete discomfiture on the Tithe Bill before the end of the Session.

It would not dissolve the Government, but it would leave the Church to collect its revenues with about the

same success in the south of Ireland that Mr. Locke had. I suppose you know his case.

This letter is, of course, entirely confidential.

Yours faithfully,

E. J. LITTLETON.

III.

The Attorney-General for Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Confidential.) Dublin, 21st June, 1834.

My dear Sir,—In compliance with your desire I called on the Lord-Lieutenant, who had previously communicated with the Chancellor respecting the omission of the provisions you mention in the Act for the renewal of the Coercion Bill. Since Lord Wellesley succeeded to the Government here—indeed, ever since the passing of the Act—there has been a total cessation of all the associations against which the provisions of the first three clauses of the Act are directed, and I am entirely persuaded that a re-formation of them can only be effected by the exertions of one person. Of the probability of such an event you can judge much better than we can. Certain it is that in this respect there is not any present existing evil which can be adduced to prove the necessity of continuing the powers of the Act. On the other hand, if facility can be acquired in

passing the remainder of the Act (without the Court Martial clauses) and in passing the Tithe Bill (a measure become essential to the existence of the clergy), there is scarcely room to question the expediency of giving up the part of the measure which appears to be an impediment to both these objects. This I stated to the Lord-Lieutenant as my view of the subject, and I believe it agrees with that which he entertains.

We may have occasion to regret the loss of the powers which the omitted clauses would have conferred upon us. A letter to the electors of Wexford, published yesterday, forbids us to expect a cessation of the agitation of the repeal. I hope, however, that the vote of both Houses of Parliament will tend to abate a good deal of the delusion under which we have hitherto laboured.

Ever, my dear Sir, most faithfully and truly yours,

J. BLACKBURNE.

To the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

IV.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Private.) Phœnix Park, 21st June, 1834.

My dear Sir,—I have received your letter[1] of the 19th of June. I entirely agree with you, and have written to Lords Grey, Brougham, and Melbourne accordingly.

The Venue Bill may be allowed to expire.

Always yours affectionately, W.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

V.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to Earl Grey, K.G.[2]

(Secret.) Phœnix Park, June 21, 1834.

My dear Lord,—Understanding from some communications with Mr. Littleton that the omission of those

[1] Vide p. 10 of the preceding Memoir.

[2] [This letter remained unpublished and unknown until it was printed by me in the 'Edinburgh Review' for July, 1871, in answer to the assertion, which was repeated by the present Earl Grey in a letter addressed to that journal, that this letter was a strictly private and confidential one. I do not so regard it, though that statement was repeatedly made in Parliament when an attempt was made to force Ministers to produce the correspondence, which they most properly refused to submit to. But the letter has an official character. It was addressed by the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Prime Minister of England. It was laid before the Cabinet, and upon this document the whole subsequent decision of the question turned. It had therefore the greatest possible influence on the subsequent course of events.—H. R.]

clauses in the Protective Act (which confer extensive and extraordinary powers of preventing meetings, &c., on the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland) would facilitate other measures of importance in their progress through Parliament, and would also secure the re-enactment of the other important provisions of the Act, I think it may be convenient to your Lordship to receive an early statement of my sentiments on the subject.

The objects of that Act were to prevent agitation as the remote cause of outrage, and to restrain the nightly assemblies of the people, the effect of that cause.

The powers conferred on the Lord-Lieutenant of prohibiting and suppressing meetings were directed to check the first of these evils, and unquestionably were successful in their first operation; but your Lordship cannot forget that they were found useless during the whole course of the agitation for the Repeal of the Union, and that perhaps the happy result of that agitation is in some respect to be ascribed to the moderation of the Government in abstaining from the exercise of the powers which it possessed. The question of the Repeal of the Union is quite extinct, and if (as I hope) an efficient Tithe Bill is passed, it will be impossible to revive the agitation, unless a clamour can be raised on some such question as the renewal of great and extraordinary powers of an arbitrary spirit without evident necessity.

Unless, therefore, the necessity is evident, the renewal of the powers would only serve to furnish new ground for agitation and violence.

I am aware that it is possible, when these powers shall be withdrawn, some meetings under a different

character, but of an equally factious and troublesome spirit, may arise; and that it is not the Party of Repeal alone from which mischief is to be apprehended. But I think that the ordinary powers of the law, with the weight of public opinion, would easily defeat such wicked attempts. I cannot therefore state that I consider the preservation of the clauses respecting Meetings as they now stand in the Act to be essential to the public tranquillity of Ireland, or that the omission of them would endanger the public safety. The powers conferred by those clauses of the Act directed against the nightly councils and assemblies of the people, and imposing restraints upon disorderly movements and excesses, may be rather deemed as precautionary moral regulations than infractions of civil rights. These regulations must be re-enacted; without them it will be scarcely possible to maintain the public peace. If a Bill could be framed continuing to the executive authority the power of enforcing these regulations for three or five years, such an extension of time to this part of the Bill would be an ample retribution for the loss of all its other provisions.

On a very material branch of this question I cannot perhaps touch without exceeding the limits of my official duty, but it is so closely interwoven with every part of the subject that I am certain your Lordship will not disapprove that excess of zeal, however indiscreet. I mean the general necessity of producing to Parliament in the present crisis the most temperate measures which the public safety will admit, respecting the condition of Ireland. The Act in question must be deemed an exception to the spirit

and character of your Lordship's Government; it was expressly founded on the necessity of the case, it was stated to be temporary and transient in its nature, and an impatience was felt and signified to be relieved from the burthen of continuing such a law. I think that the demonstration of a fixed aversion to the renewal of any provisions of this law, which cannot be proved to be within the strict necessity of the case now existing, would not fail to produce a most salutary effect in the House of Commons and in the mind of every liberal man in the country. I think an union is now more necessary than ever to meet the array of the enemy. This, I believe, would tend greatly to accelerate the Irish Tithe Bill and other measures, and to bring the Session to an early and tranquil conclusion. Your Lordship will perceive that some parts of this letter differ from my letter to Lord Melbourne of the 11th June; but I trust that the change of circumstances since that time will sufficiently justify the difference.

In opening the subject of the renewal of this Act to Parliament, I am convinced that your Lordship will render justice to the spirit in which it has been administered. To the meetings I have never applied it. I left the frantic project of the Repeal of the Union to destroy itself by discussion and free reason. Where I have applied the law the cases were irresistible, and it was loudly and repeatedly demanded by the voice of the country. Even then I applied it reluctantly and with every precaution, and it has everywhere been attended with complete effect. Your Lordship knows whether I have sought for the renewal of these tremendous powers (more dreadful perhaps to me than to the people

of Ireland) with less discretion than I have exercised them; and I rely on your Lordship and Lord Melbourne with the fullest confidence for my defence against any assaults which may be directed either upon any alleged violence or timidity in the exercise of the powers committed to me by this law, or upon any suggestions which I have offered for its amendment.

Believe me, &c.,

(Signed) WELLESLEY.

The Earl Grey, K.G.

(Endorsed.)

Lord Wellesley's letter to Lord Grey recommending the omission of certain clauses in the Bill for renewing the Coercion Act, June 21, 1834.

VI.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to Viscount Althorp, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.

23rd June, 1834.

Dear Lord Althorp,—Having observed, in looking through the Correspondence relating to the state of Ireland, that there is *nowhere one paragraph that would justify the re-enactment of the powers in the Coercion Act for prohibiting meetings*, I wrote to Lord Wellesley and Blackburne on the subject.

I enclose you their answers. Blackburne's you may show Lord Grey if you please; but not Lord Wellesley's, for a reason I will tell you when I see you.

If Lord Grey can concur, and will state in the House of Lords at five o'clock to-day the intention of the Government with respect to the Coercion Act, it will smooth many difficulties in the House of Commons.

Yours faithfully,

E. J. LITTLETON.

Lord Althorp did not reply to this letter, as I saw him soon after it was sent to him. He told me he was truly glad to receive it. He was not sure Lord Wellesley's communication might not break up the Government. But that he never would consent, after the receipt of Lord Wellesley's declaration that the powers to suppress meetings were unnecessary, to vote for those clauses; and that therefore the Government must be broken up if Lord Grey would not yield. Lord Althorp advised me to see O'Connell, with a view to keep him quiet.

Lord Melbourne, whom I had seen previously, and who was very angry with Lord Wellesley and me, admitted that the Government must yield.

I did not see Lord Grey till several days after I had seen O'Connell. He showed me Lord Wellesley's first letter of June 21, and another received subsequently, in both of which Lord Wellesley insisted in the strongest terms on the inexpediency of renewing the Meetings clauses. H.

VII.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Grosvenor Place, June 23rd, 1834.

My dear Lord,—Two-thirds of the Cabinet and every one connected with the Government will greatly rejoice at the prospect held out by your letter of the abandonment of the unnecessary power for the suppression of Meetings. I do not see how the continuance of it could have been justified on the face of the papers that will be laid on the table, in not one of which is there a syllable from which the necessity for reviving that particular enactment can be inferred.

The Cabinet must of course go with you. When a Lord-Lieutenant asks for unconstitutional powers, they may be properly withheld by a Government at home. But when he declares they can be dispensed with, no Government can require them from Parliament.

If I mistake not, you will reap the fruit of your decision in great popularity here, and a peaceful autumn in Ireland.

I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

VIII.

Extract from a Letter from the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Irish Office, June 24, 1834.

My dear Lord,—Lord Althorp, who was delighted with your recommendation conveyed to Lord Grey yesterday, told me in the evening that Lord Grey was extremely angry with me, for having suggested to you that the abandonment of the power to suppress meetings might afford facilities for the transaction of other business now before Parliament.

I accordingly visited Lord Melbourne this morning. I found Melbourne anxious to retain the power. I found Lord Grey in good humour and high spirits, quite determined, however, to retain the power. And that he had written to you to express his conviction that so far from affording facilities, the abandonment of that part of the Coercion Bill which gives power to suppress meetings would only draw down on us the ridicule of the Tories and their fiercer opposition.

Notwithstanding this disposition on their parts, I feel persuaded the Bill will be confined to the object of suppressing agrarian disturbances. It is a measure on which Lord Althorp can have his own way. Lord Grey takes of all questions the House of Lords view. A Cabinet will consider the question to-morrow. I will learn and convey to you the result by to-morrow's post.

I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

IX.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Private.) Dublin Castle, 24th June, 1834.

My dear Sir,—I have been shut up in the Privy Council two entire days on Tithe Appeals, and I have finished them all with the reluctant aid of the Chancellor. I wish to mention that I have looked over the Protective Act, and that I think the clauses you enumerate, with the alterations you propose, will answer all purposes. I send you, through Sir W. Gosset, some notions from Vignoles.

There have been indications of Orange tomfooleries for the 1st July. I desired Sir. W. Gosset to send a circular letter some days ago to the Lieutenants of Counties, of which I conclude he has sent you a copy.

I should be much obliged to you if as soon as possible you would send me a copy of the Inclosures No. (1) and (2) to my despatch of the 18th January 1834 to Lord Melbourne. I find I have no copy of them here.

I hope to hear from you all to-morrow.

Always yours affectionately,

W.

To this letter, which is of insignificant importance, the following memorandum was annexed:—

(Secret. To be destroyed when read.)

The Chancellor (Lord Plunket) is much annoyed at the whole course of policy respecting the Church. He

told me that he had not been consulted, and did not consider himself pledged to support it.

He complained also that the Tithe Bill had been altered without his consent, and that he would not support it in the House of Lords. He greatly dislikes the Commission; also the alterations in the Protective Act; and says that he is grieved and alarmed at the general aspect of affairs.

I never saw him so much out of spirits and temper.

(Endorsed 'Secret.')

X.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

(Private and Secret.) Phœnix Park, 25th June, 1834.

My dear Sir,—I have received a letter from Lord Grey, expressing great aversion to the omission of the Meetings clauses, and stating a positive opinion that 'the proposed concession would *not* facilitate the progress of the Tithe Bill, or of the remaining parts of the Coercion Bill, and still less would render it possible to propose any extension of the term of the Coercion Bill.'

I should be very unwilling to oppose his opinion, and shall certainly be satisfied with whatever course the Cabinet chooses to adopt. The whole question appears to me doubtful, *if it be certain that we cannot obtain an extension of the Act in point of time.* Let me know how this matter stands. I wish you joy of your victory over O'Connell on Tuesday morning; 360 to 99 is tolerable odds.

Ever yours affectionately,

W.

XI.

Extract of a letter from the Right Hon E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Grosvenor Place, Sunday, June 29, 1833.

My dear Lord,—A Cabinet was held this evening, at which your two letters to Lord Grey were read and discussed.

As you had expressed your willingness to acquiesce in any decision they might come to on the subject of the Coercion Act, and as Lord Grey declared that nothing should shake his resolve not to propose any renewal which did not embrace the provisions respecting Meetings, his colleagues yielded the point. The Act will consequently be renewned, with the exception of the Court-martial clauses. I feel deeply mortified by this determination. My conviction is that it is one of pure and unmitigated folly. The Irish members were getting into good humour, under a belief that the measure would be restricted to the necessity of the case. O'Connell was heartily repenting of his letter to the Wexford people. He was really anxious to render us covert service.

I knew this by various intelligible signs, and through various channels. Shaw had equally discovered it, and the faction that he leads—full as despicable as O'Connell's (indeed it has less justification for its violence) —was becoming furious.

O'Connell will now commence a new agitation. The first thunder will appear in the 'True Sun' the day

after Lord Grey proposes the bill in the House of Lords. We shall lose the county of Wexford, in which election O'Connell had not intended to have interfered, and we shall be frustrated in the collection of the land tax, which he was disposed to have allowed to take its course.

I am persuaded there never was a more unwise act than this Cabinet decision, and what is singular is, that the majority feel it to be so.

Another alteration of the Tithe Bill emanated from this Cabinet meeting.

* * * *

I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

XII.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

(Private.) Phœnix Park, 29th June, 1834.

My dear Sir,—I am grieved to perceive by a letter from Lord Melbourne that mine to Lord Grey is *productive of great inconvenience and embarrassment.* I wish they would let you see it, and I think you would be of opinion that it affords no proof of any such intention on my part, whatever may be its effect. Whatever the Cabinet shall determine I shall abide by it as cordially as if it were my own opinion. But surely I have not committed any intentional outrage by a plain statement 'that no proof can be furnished of the actual existence of any necessity in Ireland for the renewal of the powers of suppressing Meetings.'

I see that Lord Grey has given notice of the introduction of the Renewal Act for Tuesday. I am glad of it.

Many thanks for the caricature, which is excellent.

Always yours affectionately,

WELLESLEY.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

XIII.

Extract from a letter from the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Grosvenor Place, July 1, 1834.

My dear Lord,—Lord Melbourne was a little chagrined at your having written to Lord Grey instead of to him on the subject of the Coercion Bill. The Cabinet has just received a slight accession of Liberalism. Brougham's suggestion to you was made in consequence of it. I think it was also recommended by good sense. But had the recent changes not occurred, Brougham would not have mooted the point. Melbourne, therefore, would have wished at all events to have been the party through whom your suggestions should have been made. He told me this. However the 'embarrassment' has been easily got over by your prudent assurance conveyed in both your letters, which I saw, that while you thought it right to express your own conviction, you would subscribe to the wishes of the Cabinet. The Ministers, however, are in a great stew lest you should be angry. Several of them have declared to me their apprehensions. Your next letter is therefore looked for with anxiety.

I rejoice you took the step you did, which will be useful though it did not succeed.

* * * * *

Ever, my dear Lord, faithfully yours,

E. J. Littleton.

Memorandum on the course taken by Lord Wellesley on learning that Lord Grey disapproved his proposal.

The Cabinet having determined the question and resolved to persevere with the Bill unaltered, Lord Wellesley immediately addressed to the Secretary of State the following despatch. It was not consistent with the opinions Lord Wellesley had himself formed and expressed some days previously; but it was dictated by a manly determination to carry out the policy of the Government, whatever that might be, and to heal the breach which Lord Wellesley's letter of June 21 had unintentionally opened.

The Lord-Lieutenant's official declaration was in the following terms, but it is not clear whether it had reached the hands of Earl Grey when he moved the second reading of the Coercion Bill on the following day (July 3) in the House of Lords.

XIV.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

(Secret.) Dublin Castle, July 2nd, 1834.

My Lord,—Your Lordship and His Majesty's Government must have given the fullest consideration to the documents which I have regularly submitted to you, concerning the internal condition of Ireland with regard to public tranquillity; and you will no doubt have formed the conclusion which must result from an examination of those documents, that although improvement has been made in several important points, the disposition to combine against the law and to resist its due administration still exists to an alarming degree. In the course of my observations upon these documents, I have expressed my opinion that it would be highly dangerous to the public peace to suffer the Act for 'the more effectual suppression of local disturbances and dangerous associations in Ireland' to expire, which event must take place on the 1st August, unless the law should be renewed.

The necessity which originally required the enactment of that statute in my judgment still continues. In many districts of Ireland the most dreadful excesses have been committed, and a lawless spirit prevails which the ordinary course of justice cannot reach.

It is therefore my decided opinion that the Act in question should be renewed. Your Lordship and His Majesty's Government will be better able than I can

be to form a judgment upon the propriety of altering in any degree the provisions of that Act.

It has afforded me great satisfaction to receive the approbation of His Majesty's Government in the exercise of the powers entrusted to my station under the law as it now stands, and under any renewal of it your Lordship may be assured that I shall endeavour to pursue the same course of firmness and moderation.

I have the honour to be, my Lord, with great truth and regard, your Lordship's faithful servant,

(Signed) WELLESLEY.

XV.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Private.) Phœnix Park, July 3rd, 1834.

My dear Sir,—I am greatly obliged to you for your kind letters during the late curious discussion, which I was hoping to hear had terminated at last; this event was communicated to me this morning in a very kind note from Lord Grey. O'Connell (with the aid of Stanley!) seems resolved to justify the retention of the powers of controlling him. I agree with you that I have no reason to repent the step which I took; but I am not at all angry with those who viewed the matter in a different light, as you will perceive by my letters of yesterday to Lords Grey and Melbourne. I received yesterday a most friendly and kind letter from Lord Melbourne.

Nothing would grieve me more than to have apparently (really is impossible) neglected him. I wrote to Lord Grey expressly for the purpose of keeping my communication out of the official channel; and I mentioned *this* to Lord Melbourne on the same day. You will remember that you advised me to write to Lord Grey. Shall I *now* write any explanation to Melbourne, for whom I really entertain sincere affection?

Ever, my dear sir, yours affectionately,

WELLESLEY.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

XVI.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Grosvenor Place, July 4, 1834.

My dear Lord,—You will see in the papers a report of a most unpleasant discussion which occurred in the House of Commons last night. The shortest way to put you in possession of the merits of the case will be to describe to you *seriatim* the facts.

When your first letter came over to Lord Grey, recommending the abandonment of that part of the Coercion Bill which empowers the Lord-Lieutenant to suppress meetings, Lord Althorp and I had an immediate interview, at which he said that your communication rendered it impossible to renew that part of the Act; that he would never vote for it, and that he was quite confident it would be omitted. He concurred fully in a suggestion which I made to him that, if that were the case, it would be as well that O'Connell should be put on his guard and not be allowed to run, under erroneous impressions, into another system of agitation, which he was evidently about to commence. It was accordingly settled that I should see O'Connell, and, under an injunction of secrecy, which we both conceived he would respect, inform him we had reasons for thinking the Bill would not be renewed in an obnoxious form. I felt so entirely satisfied, from Lord Althorp's assurances, that the measure would be simply confined to agrarian disturbances, that I did not hesitate to tell O'Connell that the Irish Government

was of opinion that any other enactment was, under all circumstances, unnecessary; and on O'Connell expressing some doubt whether others in the Cabinet would not overrule the opinions of the Lord-Lieutenant and myself, I added that 'my own feeling about it was so decided that I did not think it possible for me to vote for the measure in any other form than as directed against agrarian disturbances.' I added that the moment the question was definitely settled he should be informed.

What was my surprise when, only two or three days afterwards, I heard the whole conversation repeated in the House of Commons.

I of course kept my word by informing O'Connell of the failure of my expectation when Lord Grey insisted on the renewal of the powers respecting meetings. But I did so through a third party, not thinking it safe to have any further communication with him personally.

He was standing under the throne while Lord Grey made his speech, and there stated openly and fully all that had passed between him and myself to everybody who would hear it.

The embarrassment in which this black act of perfidy on his part has placed the Government was put *au comble* yesterday, by the inevitable explanation in the House of Commons. I have not seen any other report of the discussion than that in the 'Morning Post,' which makes scandalous misrepresentations and perversions of the facts stated on both sides. I have no doubt that in the 'Times' and 'Chronicle' you will see them impartially stated.

I wrote this morning to Lord Althorp to beg that if my retirement from office could smooth in any manner the embarrassment in which the Government was placed by the indiscretion of which I had been guilty in having so far confided in O'Connell, I hoped there would be no hesitation in telling me so; that the only reason I had not begged to retire was that I could not discover how a resignation on my part could aid them.

All this dilemma is the result of an unconstitutional determination on the part of Lord Grey to take powers the necessity for which is disclaimed by the Irish Government.

Both Lord Althorp and Lord Melbourne told me, on the morning on which I saw O'Connell, that your advice would of course be acquiesced in. My indiscretion, therefore, was not so great as it must appear. But it is impossible to explain this publicly.

It would appear from O'Connell's speech that my great object in seeing him had been to trick him into inactivity during the Wexford election. The subject was never mentioned between us. It was only referred to incidentally when I cited his letter to the people of Wexford as an evidence that he seemed disposed to run into a violent course.

I will write to you, again if it be possible, after I have seen some of the Government this evening.

I have not time to write to Gosset, but I should like him to know the tenour of this statement.

Ever, my dear Lord, yours faithfully,

E. J. Littleton.

I see the 'Times'' report is tolerably correct, except that in O'Connell's speech your name is substituted by mistake for Anglesey's. The statement that I quoted Lord Anglesey's confidence in O'Connell was a mistake of his, for I can hardly suppose it to have been a deliberate lie. He himself mentioned it by way of boast.

To His Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant.

XVII.

The enclosed letter from Lord Althorp, dated July 4, 1834, was written in answer to a note from me, in which I expressed my willingness to retire, if my doing so could at all relieve the embarrassment in which my imprudence and O'Connell's perfidy had placed them.

Viscount Althorp to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

(Private.) Downing Street, July 4, 1834.

My dear Littleton,—The scrape we are in I admit to be a great one, but I do not see how your resignation will do us any good now. If you had resigned when I told you first of the decision of the Cabinet, it would have been better for *yourself*; but it must have broken up the Government. If you resign now you will injure yourself, and do us no good. I will show your letter to Lord Grey. I think you were quite right in making the offer, and it is possible, but I do not think probable, that he may differ from me as to the course to be pursued. I confess I do not see my way very clearly. What I should like best is that we should be beaten on the three clauses in the House of Commons—a thing I think extremely probable—and then of course Lord Grey, and indeed all of us, must resign, and so get out of all difficulty. I wish only you had told me at first the whole of the conversation you had with O'Connell, and I then would have taken a course which would have saved you from this scrape.

Because had I known what you had done I would have stood firm, and smashed the Government at once. I have not seen Lord Grey yet since the scene in the House of Commons; he was out all yesterday evening. I am very doubtful whether he may not think the scrape irremediable. I think it nearly so.

Yours most truly,

ALTHORP.

Memorandum on Lord Althorp's Letter of July 4.

I did not reply to Lord Althorp's letter of the 4th, as I wished to avoid anything like controversy with him. But I asked the advice of Lord Ebrington and Fazakerley, two of Lord Althorp's most esteemed friends, and disclosed to them without reserve a most complete detail of all that had passed in my interview with Brougham, when he counselled my writing to Lord Wellesley; my correspondence with Lord Wellesley; my interview with Lord Melbourne, when he assured me I might rely on the abandonment of the clauses; my interview with Lord Althorp; his promise that the clauses should be abandoned, or that he would resign; and a precise detail of my brief interview with O'Connell, held by Lord Althorp's authority, and Mr. O'Connell's engagement to consider it strictly confidential. I told them that I had admitted to Mr. O'Connell that Lord Althorp's sentiments on the proposed modifications for the Coercion Bill corresponded with mine, but had given him no further information. But that I had not denied, because I could not deny,

Mr. O'Connell's declared knowledge of Lord Grey's opposite opinions; but I gave no further details. That the reason why I had given Lord Althorp no fuller information of my short conversation with O'Connell, was that no importance whatever attached to it in my mind, as I conceived no possible mischief could result from it, till the moment that O'Connell published it to all the world, when it was too late. I told them that, in my opinion, the real mistake had been that committed by Lord Althorp himself, in having misled me by his positive assurances that he would insist on the omission of the clauses, and that he should resign if it were not conceded, which he knew Lord Grey would not permit. This assurance of Lord Althorp, together with Lord Melbourne's, were the causes of the complete confidence with which I had acted. I thought that Lord Ebrington and Fazakerly felt strongly with me. But they committed themselves to no opinion; but after a short conference they proposed to go to Lord Althorp, and confer with him. A short time afterwards they returned, and told me Lord Althorp would do what I desired by making a full statement in the House of his participation in the affair, which they thought he was bound to do.

H.

XVIII.

Lord Chancellor Brougham to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

Received at 10 A.M. July 5th, 1834.

(Private and confidential.) Saturday.

My dear Littleton,—I had no opportunity of defending you last night when I first spoke, for you had not been attacked. I afterwards, however, supplied the defect, and as I think in the way most agreeable to you—by throwing myself into the same boat with you, which is always my desire when a friend is assailed. I avowed having had the same views, and stated them to Lord Farnham.

I have heard with astonishment and entire unbelief the rumour that you thought of going out! My answer was, 'Do you think I want to go too?' for I said the same thing to others and to enemies.

Now I went into the case, and explained the use of your speaking to O'Connell which followed from the position you thought, and had reason to think, the affair was in. But as to *going out*, I assure you I never dreamt of it less, and I COMMAND you to dismiss all such ideas if you have, in a fit of ill-humour, entertained them.

I wrote to Lord Wellesley.

Yours ever affectionately and sincerely,

H. B.

XIX.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord Chancellor.

Grosvenor Place, 5th July, 1834.

My dear Lord Chancellor,—The very kind manner in which you endeavoured to cover me yesterday demands my best thanks.

I regret, however, to tell you that on the fullest deliberation I have felt it impossible after what passed in the House of Lords last night to avoid tending to Lord Grey my resignation.

The universal construction that will be put on his speech is that he thought there was no justification for my conduct. I had no right to expect that he should defend me. But an admission that the question of extent or limitation with respect to the Coercion Bill was open when I communicated with O'Connell, *and of his belief that I thought I had ample grounds* for the impression I gave to that rogue, would have cost Lord Grey nothing, and would have done for me all I could have desired.

As the matter stands on Lord Grey's speech, I do not doubt that the public will think my retention of office bad taste, and consequently culpable.

I will take care that my retirement shall be productive of the least possible inconvenience to Government, with reference to measures now before Parliament.

I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

The Right Hon. the Lord Chancellor.

XX.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to Earl Grey, K.G.

[Sent to Lord Grey at 3 o'clock July 5, 1834.]

Grosvenor Place, 5th July, 1834.

My dear Lord,—I feel myself reluctantly compelled, after a calm consideration of what is reported to have occurred last night in the House of Lords, to tender to you my resignation of the office I hold in your Government.

Were I to remain in office, I am painfully apprehensive, after that discussion, that the public might consider that I did so contrary to the wishes of yourself and the interests of your colleagues.

I take this step in ill-humour only with myself. I am too conscious of being not the offended, but the offending party. But having become involved in a serious difficulty by an ill-judged act of confidence, I must look to the best means in my power of preserving myself from further injurious animadversion.

The only relief to the embarrassment of my position could have been derived from a public admission on the part of the Government that the precise limitation of the intended Coercion Bill was unsettled at the time of my communication with O'Connell, and that they were sure that I was at that time justified in my own mind in a belief that the Bill might be restricted as I had described.

I had no right, however, to ask for such a declara-

tion from them, whose position might have been rendered still more difficult by it. I waited therefore for the possible chance of its being voluntarily made.

That this has not been done I do not in the smallest degree complain. But the occasion furnished by the strictures made on my conduct in the House of Lords last night, having gone by without such palliation having been offered for it, I think it the safest course for me to retire.

I hope I may be permitted to explain to my friends the grounds on which I have thought it prudent to take this step.

My resignation shall be rendered as little as possible a source of inconvenience to the Government. I will continue to sit behind the Treasury bench, will support the Coercion Bill in its present shape, and will attend to the Tithe and Church Bill in the Committees on them, and shall also continue to testify by every means in my power my entire participation in the principles of your Government.

I cannot allow myself to close this communication without expressing how sincerely grateful I feel for the confidence, kindness, and courtesy I have always experienced at your hands.

I remain, my dear Lord, with the greatest respect and regard, most faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

The Earl Grey.

XXI.

Earl Grey, K.G., to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

(Private.) Downing Street, July 5th 1834.

My dear Littleton,—I have just received your letter, and lose not a moment in requesting that you will take no step, nor inform any one of your having written to me, till I have consulted with some of my colleagues, and particularly with Althorp.

I thought it best to confine myself to the simple declaration that I knew nothing of the communication with O'Connell, and that if I had been previously apprized of it I should have endeavoured to prevent it.

I could not have said that I thought the matter was unsettled, because all Lord Wellesley's letters previous to the 21st of June had expressed in the strongest terms his opinion that none of the clauses of the Bill, except those relating to courts-martial, should be omitted; and up to that time it was settled that it should be renewed; and instructions were given to the Attorney-General, and a Bill actually drawn with that view. The letter from Lord Wellesley of the 21st took me quite by surprise; but, as I believe I told you, nothing would have induced me to propose a renewal of the Bill or to remain responsible for the peace of Ireland without the Meetings clauses.

Nothing could give me greater pain than a separation from you under any circumstances, but more particularly under circumstances like the present. I can

well understand the feelings by which you are actuated; but however strong they may be, I must again request you not to suffer them to lead you to take any decisive step till further time has been taken for consideration.

I am, my dear Littleton, yours very sincerely,

GREY.

The Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

Memorandum on Lord Grey's observation that 'he could not have said he thought the matter unsettled, because of Lord Wellesley's previous Letters.'

Lord Grey seems not to be aware that I had received Lord Wellesley's suggestion that the meeting clauses should be omitted, and that I had learnt from themselves the sentiments of Lord Brougham, Lord Althorp, and Lord Melbourne on the subject before I saw O'Connell; and that it was with Lord Althorp's entire concurrence that I sought O'Connell.

H.

XXI.

The Lord Chancellor to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

Received at 7 o'clock, July 5th, 1834.

(Private.) Saturday.

My dear L——,—Lord Grey would have said so had it struck him. Nothing can be more perfect than his feeling towards and his esteem and value for you.

But really, as to *resigning*, it is madness or worse—i. e. drivelling; and so all our friends think except one, who says he thinks you naturally tendered the resignation, but that as it certainly must be refused, your pressing it would be ridiculous. I really must fairly say I never saw so lame a case for going out. In a word, it is not be thought of for a moment. Your speech last night was most successful.

Yours,

H. B.

XXII.

Extracts of a Letter from the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Grosvenor Place, July 5th, 1834.

My dear Lord,—After an interview I had yesterday with Lord Althorp, Abercrombie, and Ellice on the Tithe Bill, Lord Althorp informed me that Lord Grey meant to state, in the House of Lords, that at the time of my communication with O'Connell the question of the *extent* of the provisions that should be introduced into the Coercion Bill was open, and that there was no doubt that I acted under a full belief that the impressions that I gave him could be realized.

After the recommendations sent by you, the assurance of the Chancellor that he should insist on their being acted on, Lord Melbourne's admission that your advice could not be over-ruled, and Lord Althorp's declaration to me that he could never consent to bring in the Bill with the Meeting clauses, surely my impressions on the subject were warranted.

Judge, then, of my surprise when I read Lord Grey's speech in this morning's papers. I received at the same time a letter from Lord Brougham, of which I enclose you a copy, No. 1.

I felt, on full consideration, that I was at least bound to tender my resignation to Lord Grey, which I have done in a letter of which No. 2 is a copy.

I send you his answer, No. 3, just received.

Thus the matter stands.

The scrape I am in is more awkward from the manner in which it affects the Government than as regards myself.

I stand accused, of course, of great indiscretion; O'Connell of the blackest perfidy. The papers will, of course, take party views. But in society here I am happy to know there is but one feeling on the subject.

* * * * * *

I remain, my dear lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

His Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant.

XXIII.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to Viscount Althorp, M.P.

Irish Office, July 7, 1834.

Dear Lord Althorp,—I hope you will feel that it is necessary that the question of my continuance in, or retirement from, office should be settled before the House meets, as I think it not improbable I may then be asked whether I am still in office.

I have reason to believe that the general impression of persons who did not hear (I have only read) Lord Grey's speech, was that he meant to throw me over. His letter completely satisfies me that he had no such intention, and that he did not mean it as a hint to resign. But the impression on the public will be unfavourable to me, if it is not informed that I tendered my resignation and would have resigned if Lord Grey had not specially requested me not.

I am not solicitous about the manner in which this should be made known, but if I am to stay it must in some manner be made known to-day. I feel that the publication of the fact that I tendered my resignation on *Saturday* is indispensable to my character. I ask for nothing more, but it certainly would be very useful to me if a further statement were made; and I believe it would be useful to the Government by preventing the necessity of more explicit details at a future stage. A brief statement of the truth may prevent ex-

aggerated surmises of what may have occurred, and make everybody understand your position.

I would suggest that you should state this evening—

'That although I had not seen Lord Grey, it was undoubtedly not without some authority that I spoke to O'Connell;

'That it was not an unreasonable belief on my part that the question of the extent of the measure was at that time unsettled, and that the impression I gave to O'Connell would be realized;

'That the truth was that I had communicated to Lord Wellesley reasons why I thought the Meetings clauses might be abandoned;

'That he had in consequence written private letters to the principal members of the Cabinet, recommending that question to their consideration;

'That the result had been a correspondence with him and a discussion among themselves, which had terminated in a general concurrence between themselves and the members of the Irish Government that the Act ought to be renewed, with no other omission than the provisions establishing Courts-martial.'

Yours faithfully,

E. J. LITTLETON.

The Viscount Althorp.

XXIV.

Viscount Althorp, M.P., to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Private.)

My dear Littleton,—I wish you would call upon me as soon as you can, as I wish to see you before anything more passes between Lord Grey and you.

Yours most truly,

ALTHORP.

Downing Street, Sunday.

XXV.

Earl Grey, K.G., to Viscount Althorp, M.P.

(Private.) Downing Street, July 7, 1834.

My dear Althorp,—Upon further consideration of the subject of our conversation this morning, I think it will be best for all parties that I should state distinctly what appear to me to be the exact circumstances of the case.

Till the 23rd of June I had never imagined that a doubt could exist as to the necessity of re-enacting the three first clauses of the Bill.

What then took place in no degree altered my opinion, and I repeatedly declared that without those clauses I could not be the person to propose a renewal of the Bill to Parliament.

It was about this time that Mr. Littleton had his communication with Mr. O'Connell without authority from me, and without my having been ever apprized of his intention.

That from the circumstances to which I have alluded

he might have hopes that the three first clauses would be omitted I do not deny; but I cannot think it was prudent to express such hopes to any person out of the Government, and least of all to Mr. O'Connell, more especially as he had no reason to think that they were consistent with the opinions of the person who, however unworthily, is placed at its head.

The only statement, then, that can be correctly made is this:—

'That Mr. Littleton had reason to believe that the question was still undecided, and that he entertained hopes that the omissions, to which he was himself inclined, might be made; but that he had no authority from me to express such hopes, and that my opinion had never varied as to the necessity of bringing in the Bill in its present form.'

I acquit Mr. Littleton of everything except imprudence in communicating at all with Mr. O'Connell, to which I should have objected in the strongest manner if I had had any previous knowledge of his intention. The purity of his motives nobody who knows him can suspect; nor could anybody, I believe, except Mr. O'Connell, impute to him any design of intentional deception.

Under these circumstances I really see no reason why he should resign. Personally his doing so would give me the greatest pain, and the manner in which he has conducted the business of the very difficult situation in which he is placed, makes me feel that in his retirement a great loss would be sustained by the public.

Believe me, my dear Althorp, yours very sincerely,

GREY.

The Viscount Althorp.

XXVI.

Sir William Gosset, Under Secretary for Ireland, to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

(Private.) Dublin, 7th July, 1834.

My dear Littleton,—One line I must trouble you with, expressive of the disgust I feel in common with every honourable man, at the black act of the Political Fiend who has so shamefully betrayed your secret communications. I feel it, I deplore it deeply, because it has caused you pain at having subjected the Government to certain inconveniences from this misplaced confidence. Your fault lies in having too good an opinion of human nature, and in not believing the devil to be so black as he is painted. I earnestly hope that it will not be the cause of your retiring from office. Your feelings and convenience ought to yield to the public weal, and you should not increase the embarrassment of Ministers by quitting them at this juncture. Besides, your quitting the Government on this occasion would be a triumph of your enemies.

I declare this business has given me such uneasiness as to affect my liver, equal to a trip to the East Indies. Your next letter will, I hope, act as a remedy and set me all to rights again.

Yours ever most sincerely,

W. GOSSET.

XXVII.

Viscount Althorp, M.P., to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

(Private.)

My dear Littleton,—I send you a copy of what I intend to say. Lord Grey consents to my saying it. Let me see you about four o'clock.

Yours most truly,

ALTHORP.

Monday, July 7th, 1834.

XXVIII.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, to Viscount Althorp, M.P.

Irish Office, July 7, 1834.

Dear Lord Althorp,—I return you the paper of intended observations.

The first observation, which I have erased, would give an impression that a voucher was deemed requisite out of doors for the accuracy of my statement. When I spoke of impression out of doors, I alluded to the opinion that I ought to resign in consequence of Lord Grey's speech.

It certainly would be desirable for me to have some kind of admission that I had *permission* at least (if the word 'authority' be too strong) which I thought sufficient for a communication with O'Connell.

The conditional manner in which the latter sentence

is worded, would scarcely I think, in the estimation of any friends of mine, allow me to remain; it will sound too like 'We allow him to remain for the present.'

My resignation is tendered, and ought to be accepted or refused.

If I perceive that Lord Wellesley is embarrassed by my continuance in office, I shall retire of my own accord, but in that quarter the question will not arise. It is one purely for the decision of Lord Grey.

Yours faithfully,

E. J. LITTLETON.

The Viscount Althorp.

XXIX.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

(Private and confidential.) Phœnix Park, Monday, July 7, 1834.

My dear Sir,—Your letters, received yesterday and to-day, have afflicted me so much that I am quite unable to return any answer to them which satisfies my mind, and I trust you will excuse my wish to obtain a longer space of time for the purpose of forming a more sound judgment on the subject, before I give you my final opinion upon it.

In the meanwhile, however, I trust you will not permit your judgment upon your own conduct to

inflict a sentence that would greatly injure all yonr friends, who must all be conscious that every one of them is as obnoxious to error as you are, and that every generous mind is open to the mischiefs of misplaced confidence. Certainly, as I view the question from this distance, I should have dissuaded all confidential intercourse with a person who has cast off all the ties of human society, and is under no restraint of civil, moral, or religious obligation. But it is difficult to state how I should have viewed the question if I had been in the immediate scene of action, and I am not now by any means certain that the conduct of this '*Bellua centiceps*' would not have been mild and submissive, if it had been deemed prudent to soothe the monster. The result of this transaction, I fear, will be unpleasant, but it would be much aggravated by any sudden and violent step, which I hope will not be taken.

I have not been well for some days past. I will write again as soon as I am able to collect my thoughts.

Ever yours affectionately,

WELLESLEY.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

XXX.

Viscount Palmerston, M.P., to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Private.) Foreign Office, 7th July, 1834.

My dear Littleton,—Althorp has, I am afraid, irrevocably determined to resign, and if so I consider the Government at an end. We are, however, to have a Cabinet this evening.

Yours sincerely,

PALMERSTON.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

XXXI.

Viscount Althorp, M.P., to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

(Confidential at present.)

My dear Littleton,—We must have no meeting of our friends, as I resigned last night. The debate put the Government, and me especially, in so disgraceful a position that I could not, with any regard to my character, submit to be so placed again.

Yours most truly,

ALTHORP.

Downing Street, July 8, 1834.

XXXII.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to Viscount Althorp, M.P.

Grosvenor Place, July 8, 1834.

Dear Lord Althorp,—I cannot refrain from expressing my conviction that there is not a man in the country that would not hear with the most extreme surprise of your resignation on the grounds on which you appear to think it necessary. I did not hear last night the slightest surmise of the possibility of any such occurrence in any quarter.

Private correspondence of course cannot be given. One discussion and division will settle that business. Thus much is quite clear to me, that that discussion and division ought to be taken before resignation is thought of.

I do hope you will consent to reconsider the step, which I consider most ill-advised and quite unnecessary, and which, I repeat, will be a surprise beyond measure to the whole country.

Yours faithfully,

E. J. LITTLETON.

The Viscount Althorp.

XXXIII.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to Earl Grey, K.G.

(Private.) Grosvenor Place, July 8, 1834.

My dear Lord,—I cannot express to you my affliction at the position to which I find by a note from Lord Althorp this morning I have been unintentionally the cause of reducing the Government. Had I believed it possible that his mind could have received such an impression respecting his own situation from the explanation he made in my favour yesterday evening, I never would have allowed a word to be said.

His resignation would fill the whole country with surprise. I was in the House of Commons till two o'clock this morning, and never heard the most distant surmise from any one member of the possibility of such a thing. The common observation of our friends was 'We must make a good muster to resist any motion respecting private correspondence.' They were all prepared to resist it, and nothing is wanting but a declaration from Lord Althorp to our friends that he means to do so.

Stanley thought so little of the motion for private correspondence, that he spoke to me only of the Committee on the Tithe Bill, and said, as he was going out of town, he supposed he should be in time for the rent-charge clauses if he comes back on Friday.

I am most deeply sensible of your Lordship's kind and considerate conduct towards me throughout this painful affair—an affair, however, which, as far as Lord Althorp is concerned, ought only to be felt to be embarrassing on public grounds.

I remain, my dear Lord, most faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

The Earl Grey.

XXXIV.

Earl Grey, K.G., to the Right Hon. E J. Littleton, M.P.

(Private.) Downing Street, July 8, 1834.

My dear Littleton,—Althorp's determination is final and irrevocable. The Government is consequently at an end.

I will say nothing more of the circumstances which have led to this. They are much too painful for me to reflect upon.

Ever yours,

GREY.

XXXV.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Grosvenor Place, July 8, 1834.

My dear Lord,—The occurrences of yesterday are pretty accurately reported in the 'Times.' The idea of exacting the production of private correspondence is monstrous. Peel himself said he would only vote for it, under a persuasion that you yourself would wish it. My strenuous advice to the Government is to tell their friends they will decidedly resist any such motion. They will be handsomely supported, and there will be an end of it.

I suppose you yourself would not object to the production of such extracts as the Government might deem desirable, protesting, however, against any forced production of any part of such communication.

The instance that Peel quoted of Sir Hussey Vivian's having clothed a letter on official business with a familiar form, proves nothing as to the practice of offices or the sense of the case.

If private correspondence between the Lord-Lieutenant and his Chief Secretary, or any members of the Government on points of opinion, are to be considered public property, there is an end of confidence, and of all safe and prudent conduct of affairs. One step further, and the publication of Cabinet discussions may be required.

I need not say how deeply pained I am by the situation in which my absurd confidence in O'Connell's

veracity has placed the whole Government. It is now useless for me to lament it. The only object is, how best to meet the united assault of the Repealers and the Tories.

I shall insist, as far as I can, on no surrender of a particle of private correspondence. It would be useful, however, to have your opinion on the policy of producing any part of it.

Lord Althorp's statement respecting myself yesterday was nothing more than what I had expected from him. I did not require him and Brougham to expose themselves to save me. But I am not surprised that Lord Althorp reflecting on the part that he had in the whole affair, judged it due to himself as well as to me to say what he did. Except on the score of having gone too far with O'Connell, it puts me quite clear with the public.

I believe, however, my own statement had been previously considered quite satisfactory.

The Cabinet sits this evening. If I learn what passes there in time, I will write you word.

I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

His Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant.

July 9, 1834.—Lord Althorp having told me what he was going to say in the House, I, like him, wrote out my speech. The 'Mirror of Parliament,' though

reporting it professedly verbatim, is not quite accurate. I copy this from the original draft.

'Sir,—The statement just made by my noble friend induces me to trouble the House with one or two observations. Nothing is more easy, after incidents have led to their final result, than to look back and perceive the course which it would have been most dignified and wisest to have taken. ("Hear, hear," from Sir R. Peel). I am now thoroughly aware that it would have been wisest for the interest of all parties, certainly of myself, if I had resigned my office when it was first communicated to me that my desire and my entire belief as to the omission of the Meetings clauses had been disappointed. I can safely say—and there are three in the Government who are my witnesses—that I received that communication with the most poignant feelings of regret. But reflecting that a resignation on my part on such a point might possibly influence the conduct of others, and produce a dissolution of the Government, I did not, on consideration, feel myself entitled to create that risk. I therefore resolved to compromise my opinion on this point, rather than injure a Government in the principles of which I so entirely agreed in the main.

'My noble friend has remarked that it was only on Thursday last that he was fully aware of the extent to which I had gone in the communication which he had authorised with the hon. and learned gentleman.[1] So

[1] Lord Althorp, in his personal communication with me on this affair, always spoke of himself as having suggested an interview with O'Connell by way of precaution. It was I who suggested it, and he approved it: but I never could persuade him that the author of the suggestion was myself.—H.

full and entire was the impression on my mind that, not merely that the details of that commuication were safe with that hon. and learned gentleman, but that I had authority on which I could rely for the certain abandonment of the Meetings clauses, that the importance of doing anything more than inform my noble friend of the result when I next happened to see him never once occurred to me.

'I need not tell the House all I have felt on this subject. I only trust the House will feel, whatever may have been my error, that I have been actuated by no other motive than that of an anxiety to promote the peace of a country that has always had my sincerest sympathies, and for which I was at the time in great measure responsible.'

XXXVI.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Irish Office, 9th July, 1834.

My dear Lord,—Before this reaches you, you will no doubt have heard, from earlier channels of communication than the post, that the Government is at an end.

Lord Althorp, who from the earliest receipt of your late letters on the subject of the Meetings clauses, has been violently bent on resisting their introduction into the Bill, resigned yesterday. A Cabinet sat at nine last night. The King has accepted the resignation of the Ministers generally, and has sent for Lord Melbourne.

It is useless to indulge in vain exculpations of myself or crimination of others. The main point is to conduct oneself with discretion under existing circumstances.

Till you can see the shape that events are likely to assume, I advise you not to write to anyone. As soon as Melbourne sees whether he can form a Government, I will have some conversation with him about you and your position, and will then hold a council with Lady Wellesley and Shaw. I hope you will be satisfied that we shall consult your honour before any other consideration. It is not yet clear that the change though it must be extensive, must affect you.

At all events I hope you will not write to any one till you hear from me again.

I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. Littleton.

His Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant.

XXXVII.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Irish Office, 10th July, 1834.

My dear Lord,—Nothing is settled about a Government. You will see that Brougham is for sticking to the last plank. But I doubt the possibility of his and Melbourne's succeeding in reconstructing the vessel.

Brougham ought, in my judgment, to have declared long ago that he himself was the party who first addressed you on the question of the Meetings clauses, and that your letters recommending the change were elicited by him. I felt bound to state some days ago that I had originated the proposal to you, as I wrote on the same day Brougham did. I felt myself at liberty to make that statement.; but my communication to you was, as I stated to you, made at his suggestion, with which I readily complied, believing that the state of the country (Ireland) and its prospects, and above all, the aspect of affairs here (for O'Connell was the party against whom the clauses were directed, and his disposition was to be ascertained here), did not require anything more than the provisions which were in actual operation. When Brougham sent for me it was late in the evening, and his communication was that he *had then* written to you. Brougham ought to avow that advice if further discussion shall ensue.

The best thing that could now be done would be for the bill to be hurried on, the Commons to reject the

clauses, the Lords to agree, and then all might be right again.

But I fear that matters have now gone too far.

I remain, my dear Lord, most faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

His Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant.

XXXVIII.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Private and confidential.) Phœnix Park, July 10th, 1834.

My dear Sir,—I will not expatiate on the dreadful consequences to me and the public which have arisen from the late unfortunate disclosures, because I do not wish to aggravate your feelings (which must be as severe as mine) upon the ruin and confusion which has been so suddenly brought upon the whole empire.

One point only I will touch at once without reserve. I will never consent to any disclosure or publication of the whole or any part of my private communications to you or to any member of the Government. This I feel bound by my public duty to His Majesty's service to insist upon without qualification, and I am certain you will pay implicit attention to my wishes on this subject.

Ever yours affectionately,

WELLESLEY.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

XXXIX.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to Sir William Gosset, Under Secretary for Ireland.

Irish Office, July 10, 1834.

My dear Gosset,—Though I am much pressed for time I cannot delay another day to thank you for your very kind letter of the 7th.

There never was a blacker act of perfidy than O'Connell's. He himself is so ashamed of it that he publicly cants about his sorrow and bedaubs me with his praise, as he did yesterday in the House of Commons.

I fear the game is up with us. My situation is sufficiently painful, but it would be ten times more so if I was conscious there had been any part of my conduct, with the exception of the error of my ill-judged confidence, which would not bear the glare of day.

Faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir William Gosset.

XL.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Irish Office, July 10, 6 P.M.

My dear Lord,—I have just returned from the House of Commons, which has adjourned till Monday.

I see clearly that any Tory Government will find it impossible to get through the Session. Conversations I had with Hume and Warburton, and several of the most influential of the Whig members, satisfy me that, considering the mass of business remaining to be done, it will be impossible for such an administration to proceed.

My belief is that *the clauses* must be abandoned in the House of Commons, and that if the King can be only satisfied on that point he will construct his administration accordingly. I would even now sooner bet on Lord Althorp's being placed at its head than any other person. In that case no change whatever would take place.

I therefore still advise you to say nothing, and to take no steps except to insist on your advice, that the clauses may be dispensed with, in case you are referred to again on that subject.

I remain, my dear Lord, faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

His Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant.

XLI.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to J. N. Fazakerley, Esq., M.P.

Grosvenor Place, July 11, 1834.

My dear Fazakerley,—I had no news to send you either yesterday or the day before till it was too late in the evening for me to do more than go to the House and write the results to the Lord-Lieutenant.

The papers will have told you all that is known. Singular as it may appear to you at the hour at which I am now writing (two o'clock), nothing is known of the intended arrangements. The King's having consulted Melbourne seems a pledge that he is not thinking of the Tories. He was so frightened when he made the last attempt with the Duke of Wellington, that those who live with him have always said he would never again disregard a majority of the existing House of Commons. I imagine, from the delay that has taken place, that they have sent to or for Lord Wellesley, and will await the arrival of him or an answer. I think the King very likely to desire to see him, as he has a high opinion of his judgment.

If he will only have the firmness to stick to his last opinion, not only he will do what is best to himself, but he may save the Government. Thus much is clear, that Althorp cannot now return to office, except through a submission to his opinion on the subject of the three

clauses. Nor can Abercromby, Spring-Rice, Grant, or Ellice, nor I. If they go the Whig party goes, and then what can the Tories do? They are 120. The Radicals and Repealers are 70. The Whigs are more than 400. To carry on a Government, therefore, the Tories would have to win over at a general election at least 200 members from the other parties. The difficulties of any other game are so great that I feel a strong persuasion that things must right themselves by Althorp's return to office, and the abandonment of the clauses.

Lord Grey is really greatly in fault in this business. I myself have scarcely erred more than the Minister who insisted on forcing on a Lord-Lieutenant an unconstitutional power he did not want.

Nearly the whole has now come out, except that Brougham originated the change of opinion. He holds his tongue with admirable presence of mind.

Lord John Russell was very angry with Althorp for stating in the House which of the Cabinet Ministers had sided with him. He positively cried with vexation. We had hard work to prevent his coming down yesterday to make a statement.

Hume acted for once with common sense, by withdrawing his motion and moving an adjournment, which saved us the annoyance of Lord John's vindication.

Althorp's face is joy itself. He was dreadfully nervous about his last statement, which he wrote and learnt by heart. But as he was walking out of his room to the House, he brightened up, crying out, 'Well, there is heaven beyond.'

They talk of a requisition at Brookes's to Althorp,

to ask him to return to office. I have kept out of the way of all intercourse and conversation, and mean to do so till all is settled. I know nothing, therefore, more than the report.

I believe I am going down the river to-morrow to Blackwall with Brougham, Melbourne, and a party of ladies, at Melbourne's expense. It will be sufficiently entertaining.

Ever, my dear Fazakerley, most sincerely yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

J. N. Fazakerley, Esq., M.P.

XLII.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

(Private and confidential.) Phœnix Park, July 12th, 1834.

My dear Sir,—I am very thankful to you for all your communications. I have written but once to you during this storm—at the first moment the fatal intelligence reached me.[1] In the heat of that moment I may have used some phrases that may not appear to be of the same kind spirit respecting your conduct which I assure you is fixed in my mind. I am satisfied that all your intentions were correct, and above all most friendly towards me.

I have not written to any person, nor shall I. I remain fixed to resist all disclosures of private correspondence. I am particularly anxious that all communications with Brougham should be kept strictly secret, unless he should disclose them himself. I shall be quite quiet until matters are brought to a close. I will not write to any person whatever (until then) my opinion on any part of these strange transactions.

Ever, dear Sir, yours affectionately,

WELLESLEY.

[1] There is one letter of Lord Wellesley's wanting. It was written to me about three or four days before this. It spoke of my representation having been the sole cause of his recommendation that the clauses should be admitted. I gave it to Lord Melbourne, desiring that it might be circulated in the Cabinet. And I never could recover it, though I gave myself great pains to do so.—H.

XLIII.

Viscount Melbourne to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Private.) South Street, July 12, 1834.

My dear Littleton,—Thank you for communicating to me the extracts from Lord Wellesley's letter. It involves questions which are by no means clear and settled. The distinctions between what is public and what is private are by no means defined or generally understood. Look at what Peel said in 1828 upon the question between Huskisson and the Duke of Wellington.

Yours faithfully,

MELBOURNE.

Extract from Sir R. Peel's Speech on Mr. Huskisson's Resignation.

June 2, 1828.

Alluding to Mr. Huskisson's note to the Duke of Wellington, which the latter construed as a tender of resignation :—

'My right hon. friend says that his letter was marked "private and confidential," and therefore should not have been treated as an official document. Now, Sir, I do not think that public men attach much importance to those terms. I am myself, from foolish habit perhaps, accustomed to endorse my letters connected with public business with the word "private," or the words "private and confidential." I do not, however, rely upon this point, but I contend that

no superscription or endorsement of "private and confidential" can alter the case if the letter be of a public nature. If it relates to an important public act, the mere saying that it is marked "private" cannot alter its tenour or bearing. No public man can by such means envelop in secrecy public acts of great importance. It cannot be said that the words "private and confidential" stamp that letter as one which was addressed to my noble friend under ordinary circumstances. Again, I will say that the character of the letter depended on the matter it contained and the terms in which it was couched, and not on the superscription.

XLIV.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to Viscount Melbourne.

(Private.) Irish Office, July 12th, 1834.

My dear Melbourne,—Your letter referred me to the observations of Sir Robert Peel on Huskisson's remonstrances on the Duke of Wellington's publication of his resignation.

I always thought that opinion of Huskisson's the weakest I had ever heard expressed by a public man. But I cannot think that Peel would apply the same observation to the production of correspondence, addressed in a private form and out of the common channel, by a Lord-Lieutenant to members of a Cabinet on a matter of opinion. Indeed Peel himself admitted in the House that the production must entirely depend on Lord Wellesley's wishes.

For my own part I will never consent to the production of any part of any correspondence that may have passed between the Lord-Lieutenant and myself without his consent, not that I mean to say that I would allow any party to suffer in any manner by withholding explanations necessary to justify their character and conduct.

Yours faithfully,

E. J. Littleton.

XLV.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

(Extract.) Clarendon Hotel, July 12, 1834.

My dear Lord,—On the receipt of your letter this morning, I wrote to Lord Melbourne to say you would never consent to the production of any part of your private correspondence. I thought this step necessary. I did not write to Lord Grey, because he has already strongly protested against any such production.

E. J. LITTLETON.

XLVI.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Grosvenor Place, July 14, 1834.

My dear Lord,—No expression of yours in any of your recent letters had worn to me a character of harshness.

At the hour at which I am now writing nothing is settled. Lord Althorp was my authority for saying Peel had been sent for. It turned out to be a totally

groundless report. He and the Duke of Wellington and a large party of Tories dined at Greenwich that day, and did not return till twelve o'clock that night.

I met Melbourne about an hour ago, on his way to Lord Althorp. He of course told me nothing, but asked me many questions about my own and other men's opinions of what was passing; from which I collected that without Althorp's consent to resume his post nothing could be done, and the King must be thrown on the Tories. Lord Melbourne observed, laughing, 'It seems Althorp is the tortoise on which the world reposes.'

Lord Althorp was two hours with Lord Grey this morning. I imagine we shall know nothing this evening before the post leaves. But if anything shall occur at the meeting of the House to-day (which I suppose must again adjourn), I will inform you of it.

I remain, my dear Lord, faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

XLVII.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Irish Office, July 14, 1834, 6 o'clock P.M.

My dear Lord,—At the meeting of the House this evening Lord Althorp rose and said: 'Sir, Lord Melbourne having received His Majesty's commands to form an administration, I beg to propose that this House do at its rising adjourn till Thursday next.' This motion was carried without any remark. The general understanding in the House was that Lord Althorp had consented to remain, either as First Lord or in his present post. If in the latter, it was taken for granted Lord Melbourne would be First Lord, and generally supposed that Mr. Abercromby would be Secretary of State for the Home Department.

I saw Brougham afterwards. He told me he had made no secret of having written to you on the subject of the Meetings clauses. I do not believe, however, he has given to anyone any details of what may have passed in consequence between you.

He spoke as if everything would be satisfactorily arranged. The Cabinet meets at ten o'clock to-night, to consider the final arrangements.

I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

XLVIII.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to Viscount Melbourne.

Grosvenor Place, July 16th, 1834.

My dear Melbourne,—Reflection on the course of events during the last ten days induces me to think that I should consult best for the interest of the new Government by retiring from office.

I have therefore resolved to request that you will consider the office which I hold at your disposal.

Having been the main cause of Lord Grey's retirement—an event which I shall never cease to deplore—I should feel myself in a very unnatural position were I to remain in the Government.

Having originally accepted office solely with a view to assist the Government, the same consideration now admonishes me to retire. It will be most satisfactory to me to believe that this decision on my part may relieve you from some embarrassment.

I cannot close our official connection without expressing in the warmest manner my gratitude for the valuable assistance I have received throughout our intercourse from your judgment and personal kindness towards me.

I remain, my dear Melbourne, yours faithfully,

E. J. LITTLETON.

The Viscount Melbourne.

XLIX.

Viscount Melbourne to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Private.) St. James's, July 16, 1834, half-past 3 P.M.

My dear Littleton,—I have received your letter. Pray let me see you immediately. I wish you had spoken to me before you wrote it.

Yours faithfully,

MELBOURNE.

Lord Melbourne has just sent to say that Lord Althorp and he are waiting for you in South Street.

R. D. CRAIG.

L.

The Lord Chancellor's Private Secretary to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

House of Lords, Wednesday, half-past 3.

Sir,—I am directed by the Lord Chancellor to say that he will feel obliged if you will come to him *here* with as little delay as possible. The Chancellor is much engaged, or he would write himself.

I have the honour to remain,

L. EDMUNDS.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

LI.

From Mr. Littleton's Private Secretary, Mr. R. D. Craig.

The Lord Chancellor implores you not to settle anything with Lord Melbourne till you shall have seen him. He is in the greatest state of excitement.

R. D. CRAIG.

House of Lords, July 16th, 1834, 4 P.M.

LII.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Grosvenor Place, July 16th, 1834.

My dear Lord,—I think our *embarras* is likely to terminate satisfactorily. Indeed I believe that all is now finally arranged. I feel equally confident that in the future discussions your honour will be carefully and stoutly maintained.

I have myself again tendered my resignation, which has been again refused.

I learnt this morning from Lord Ebrington, a warm and zealous friend of mine, that there prevailed a general sense among the friends of the Government that under existing circumstances I ought to retire. The report among them for the last few days was that you would be recalled. In all cases of this kind the

public expect a victim, and I assure you I seized with alacrity the opportunity of appeasing them by offering myself. I accordingly wrote the letter, of which I enclose a copy, to Lord Melbourne, and had it sent into him while at Cabinet at twelve this morning.

After the levee I received short notes from the Chancellor and Lord Melbourne, desiring to see me instantly. I sought the latter everywhere without success. I therefore went to the Chancellor at the House of Lords. He left the woolsack to speak to me in his private room. 'Good God! are you mad? Here was the Government formed; Ministers assembled at the levee to kiss hands, when your note arrives. Althorp declares nothing shall induce him to stay if you go! He considers himself in the same boat with you. Melbourne consequently has not kissed hands, I have not kissed hands, and the Government is at an end! Upon my soul you have acted like a damned fool' (dashing his three-cornered hat on the floor). I told him my story; repeated all Ebrington had said, and enquired whether any man of honour—and who had no earthly motive to desire office—who had received such an intimation, would have acted otherwise. I expressed my willingness to do everything, to take any step to make the course of the new administration smooth. I desired they would consider me a card they might either play or *écarter* as they pleased. I was only anxious not to be in the way. I hardly know what he did not promise me in the way of inducement to remain, and so sent me off to Melbourne, whose groom was scouring the town to find me.

When I got to Melbourne's house in South Street, I

found him and Althorp there, in full costume, waiting for me; and then learnt from them that in consequence of my letter, which they had shown the King, the arrangements were all suspended. For Althorp would not stir without me, and without Althorp there could be no Melbourne administration. I repeated all I had said to Brougham, and told them I begged they would deal with me exactly as they chose.

They accordingly returned to St. James's to kiss hands (as the King was waiting for them), and I to the House of Lords, where, behind the woolsack, I told Brougham all that had passed, Lord Ellenborough, who was on his legs, stopping in the middle of his speech meantime.

You will judge, from the features of this brief recital, what a state of excitement all parties were thrown into by my *démarche*, which, however, Lord Ebrington's statement rendered quite unavoidable.

I remain, my dear lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. LITTLETON.

LIII.

The Marquis of Lansdowne to the Right Hon E. J. Littleton.

(Private.) Richmond, Thursday night, July 17, 1834.

Dear Littleton,—In the debate in the House of Lords this evening I was obliged to say that the person who communicated the opinion of the Lord-Lieutenant had committed a great indiscretion. I said it because I think so, and because it was an indispensable link in the only argument I could screw together in favour of the course we are now pursuing as to the Bill, but I added that this was not more than that person himself (to whom in many other respects both this country and Ireland were so much indebted) had said of it with a candour and a spirit which everybody had approved.

Lord Ellenborough said it was ungenerous to make use of what a man had admitted against himself. I care very little whether *he* thinks so, but it would give me real concern if *you* did, which induces me, contrary to custom, to become on this occasion my own reporter.

Pray believe me, very truly yours,

LANSDOWNE.

Wharncliffe has given notice for the production of the private letters to-morrow.

LIV.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to the Marquis of Lansdowne.

Irish Office, July 19, 1834.

My dear Lord,—On my return from the House last night I found your very kind note.

I had observed what was reported to have passed in the House of Lords, and certainly nothing stated to have been there said by you could by possibility have caused me any offence. You described my conduct in terms I myself had employed. It would have been ludicrous presumption in me to suppose that those to whom I had caused so much embarrassment should go beyond the limit of common sense and fairness towards themselves and the public, to protect me against a charge to which I had confessed myself liable, and by such deference towards me to leave themselves exposed to misrepresentation.

I think the difficulty was not prudently met by Althorp, and that if, instead of resigning, he had said nothing, and had resisted Peel's threat to call for the correspondence, there would have been found little or no obstacle in either House to the passage of the original Bill.

I remain, my dear lord, very faithfully yours,

E. J. Littleton.

LV.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir W. Gosset to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton, M.P.

(Private.) Dublin, 17th July, 1834.

My dear Littleton,—Many thanks for the information that the coach is on its wheels again. It was a devil of an upset. Yesterday there was a great ferment in Dublin, caused by the very general report that Lord Durham was to come here. His Excellency was in a great *taking* about it. The intelligence which has reached us this morning has set his mind at ease upon the subject.

The Radical papers, as well as the Tory, will have it that O'Connell *insists* upon your being continued in office, and upon myself and Blackburne being turned out. I wish him success in his first desire with the same sincerity as I hope he will fail in his second.

Yours very faithfully,

W. GOSSET.

LVI.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton to Sir William Gosset, Under-Secretary.

Grosvenor Place, July 19th, 1834.

My dear Gosset,—There never has existed for a moment the slightest idea of removing *any one person* connected with the Irish Government.

The idea of Lord Durham's appointment never entered the head of any one except a friend of his, whose wish was father to that thought.

Your name was never mentioned by any one in my hearing.

I would have willingly backed out of my own accord, but they would not let me. I found my doing so would have involved serious consequences to the new arrangements, which I was much surprised to discover. So here we are all at work again very quietly.

The real truth is—and it will be one day known—I have taken much more than my due share of blame in what has occurred.

Yours faithfully,

E. J. LITTLETON.

LVII.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Private.) Phœnix Park, July 19th, 1834.

My dear Sir,—Many thanks for your letters. Your resignation surprised me. I do not very well comprehend Lord Ebrington. Your conduct has been quite clear and honourable, and Lord Althorp's the same; the whole has terminated in a manner highly creditable to you. I have not yet heard a word from Lord Melbourne or Lord Duncannon.

I perceive the obnoxious clauses are to be relinquished; this is absolutely necessary *now*. I should not be afraid (if you are pressed in the House of Commons) to make the experiment of going on until the next Session without any unconstitutional powers. The country is much more tranquil, except the Orange spirit, which is more furious than ever.

I shall not write more at length until I see and know that the Government is quite settled.

Ever yours affectionately,

W.

Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

LVIII.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. E. J. Littleton.

(Private.) Phœnix Park, 7th August, 1834.

My dear Sir,—Since I wrote to you last I have examined the Tithe Bill with more care, and continue in the opinion that it is greatly improved, and that it promises the removal of one of the greatest obstacles to the tranquillity of Ireland. I also am still of opinion that some powers of revising former compositions are necessary so satisfy the public mind here. In many cases the existing compositions are not just, and require revision. I understand that the Tories threaten to throw out the Bill in the House of Lords. I think this step would defeat its own objects. But if it should be adopted, I hope the Government will be firm. I was much amused by Arthur's[1] protest, which consists entirely of the Lord Chancellor's speeches and of my despatches The Lord Chancellor, I have no doubt, will answer effectually. With respect to myself, it is a curious inference that because I considered agitation and outrage to be inseparably connected, I was bound to maintain those provisions of the law which empowered the Government of Ireland to suppress meetings. Were those provisions the only mode of checking agitation? Is not the removal of real grievances the most effectual mode of preventing agi-

[1] The Duke of Wellington's.

tation? Witness the Tithe Bill, the Church Temporalities Bill, and the Commission (with other measures of this Session), and would not the renewal of those arbitrary powers (without a proved necessity) have furnished augmented materials of just agitation? The truth is, that Ireland will never be quieted by these annual expedients of suspending the laws and constitution of the realm. We must endeavour as soon as possible to return to the ordinary laws, and to be satisfied with a vigorous and pure administration of them. Until we are fixed on that rock we never shall know genuine peace nor security.

I shall be very anxious to know the fate of the Tithe Bill in the House of Lords.

Ever my dear Sir, yours affectionately,

WELLESLEY.

LIX.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to the Right Hon. Lord Hatherton.[1]

Hurlingham, Monday, 8th February, 1836.

My dear Lord,—I send you a copy of my *imprudent* letter[2] to Lord Grey, on which, in *defiance* of Lord Melbourne's supreme authority, I call for public judgment, and I trust I shall obtain it soon in full Parliament, where I anxiously hope for an opportunity of vindicating my public character, so wantonly and cruelly aspersed. On referring to your letter on the same occasion I find it is exactly what you stated. Your recommendation to me to write to Lord Grey

[1] [The Right Honourable Edward John Littleton was raised to the Peerage by the title of Baron Hatherton of Hatherton, in the county of Staffordshire, on May 8, 1835. It may here be convenient to add that he retained the office of Irish Secretary in Lord Melbourne's first administration, until the dissolution of that government upon the death of Lord Spencer in November, 1834. Upon the return of the Whigs to power, after Sir Robert Peel's short Government, Mr. Littleton did not return to office, but he was called up by his former colleagues and political friends to the House of Peers.—H. R.]

[2] [This expression refers to the celebrated letter of Lord Wellesley to Lord Grey, of June 21, 1834, which had never been seen even by the individual it most concerned until nearly two years after the crisis which it occasioned. It is clear from the following sentence that although Lord Wellesley absolutely refused to allow it to be produced at a time when it might have embarrassed the Government, he anxiously desired the moment when the publication of that letter should vindicate his own policy. The intimacy and affection subsisting between Lord Wellesley and Lord Hatherton was of no ordinary kind, for, in addition to other personal ties, Lord Hatherton was Lord Wellesley's son-in-law.—H. R.]

is not stated in the body of the letter, but in the postcript.

I am apprehensive that I did not yesterday express to the extent of my feelings my most warm and grateful sense of the honest zeal, affectionate interest, and generous spirit which you displayed so strongly on this lamentable and most trying occasion. Be assured that your conduct was fully appreciated, and has made an undelible impression on my heart, which cannot be effaced but by death. I never recollect to have been so deeply affected.

Lady W. is just now arrived very unwell; I have revived her by relating the particulars of your conduct, with which she was delighted. It is a great consolation to me under all my oppressions and adversities.

Believe me, my dear Lord, always with true esteem, yours affectionately,

WELLESLEY.

(Endorsed.)

Enclosing me a copy of his letter to Lord Grey, June 21, 1834.

LX.

Lord Hatherton's Answer to Marquis Wellesley's Letter of February 8, 1836.

[I showed this letter to Lord Melbourne before I sent it. He objected to no part of it. H.]

Grosvenor Place, Feb. 9th, 1836.

My dear Lord,—I thank you very much for the copy of your letter of the 21st June, to Lord Grey. I had never seen it before. Lord Grey, I remember, showed me one from you on the same subject of a few days subsequent date, and he remarked at the same time that only about ten or eleven days previously he had received a *private* letter from you, in which you earnestly recommended the entire and unqualified renewal of the Coercion Act. Lord Grey, I remember, insisted a good deal on that circumstance.

But that letter I of course never saw, nor did I ever see the famous letter of 21st June till now. The perusal of this latter letter fills me more than ever with surprise, that Lord Grey chose to risk his Government rather than give way on a point recommended by such cogent arguments, and which he must have felt to have been in accordance with the private wishes of nearly his entire Cabinet.

You were not a man to surrender any power essentially requisite to the support of the authority of your station and of public order, to the avoidance of a little inconvenience in the House of Commons. But when

on full conviction the Lord-Lieutenant took on himself the responsibility of declaring that he felt able to conduct the government of the country without an unconstitutional power, which was especially odious to a large portion of the kingdom, I must own it appeared to me extraordinary that the Minister in England should not be content to leave him under the responsibility, but should insist on forcing on him the powers the necessity and usefulness of which he disclaimed.

This was the universal feeling of the public at the time; but the object of the moment was to soothe Lord Grey and to preserve the Government from going to pieces by his secession. Nothing therefore was said in your defence at the time, but neither was one word said against you in any quarter, except on the Opposition benches at the moment. The time that has since elapsed, and all that has since occurred, has only proved the soundness of your advice.

With respect to the circumstance of your not having been sent back to Ireland, I have not hesitated to express to Lord Melbourne the same opinion I have so often expressed to yourself. It was impossible for me not to feel the liveliest interest in whatever affected your happiness and honour.

I must, however, repeat my belief that the public do not consider your honour at all affected by what has occurred. The public understanding of what occurred in July 1834 requires no correction. Whatever imprudence was committed was mine and Brougham's. I think it was very small. I do not believe that any one ever considered you at all compromised by it, and the

circumstance of your taking a high office at court when the administration was reconstituted prevented the notion that you had been desirous of returning to Ireland.[1]

I speak of my own view of the public impression.

I therefore cannot but think it far from desirable that you should now go out of your way to create any opportunity of further discussion. I perhaps err in offering any advice on the subject, but I felt it impossible to acknowledge the receipt of your letter without expressing this opinion.

I will seize the earliest opportunity of my return from the country of calling on Lady Wellesley, of whose continued illness I sincerely lament to hear.

I remain, my dear Lord, most faithfully yours,

HATHERTON.

The Marquis of Wellesley, K.G.

[1] [Marquis Wellesley was appointed to the office of Lord Chamberlain in April, 1835, upon the reconstruction of the Melbourne Administration; but political office was not again proposed for his acceptance, and he cherished in his high mind strong feelings of resentment at the manner in which Lord Melbourne had treated him both in and out of office. —H. R.]

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